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## THESIS

**HOW SHOULD SOF BE ORGANIZED?**

by

Puay Hock (Francis) Goh

June 2011

Thesis Co-Advisors:

Anna Simons  
Erik Jansen

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**HOW SHOULD SOF BE ORGANIZED?**

Puay Hock (Francis) Goh  
Major, Republic of Singapore Navy  
BEng (Hons), Nanyang Technological University (Singapore), 2001

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
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**June 2011**

Author: Puay Hock (Francis) Goh

Approved by: Anna Simons  
Thesis Co-Advisor

Erik Jansen  
Thesis Co-Advisor

Gordon McCormick  
Chair, Department of Defense Analysis

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## ABSTRACT

Special Operations Forces (SOF) today provide policy makers with *Economy of Force* and *Expansion of Choice* options. Unfortunately, not all countries are well positioned to capitalize on SOF as a strategic asset. Not all SOF organizations are appropriately structured at the national-level for the SOF system to be a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts. Organizational structure does matter. Against this backdrop, this thesis addresses: *how military SOF should be organized to ensure that they can be an effective and relevant national instrument?* To answer the question, the thesis examines four different organizational models used by SOF—Service-centric (Israel), National Military Staff Element (Norway), Component Command (France), and Service (Australia)—to elucidate their strengths and weaknesses. Implications are weighed and recommendations then made. These should be particularly pertinent to countries contemplating or having just begun to transform their SOF.

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ADF	Australian Defense Force
AMAN	Israeli Military Intelligence
BFST	Brigade des Forces Speciales Terre
C2	Command and Control
CEMA	French Armed Forces Chief of Staff
CFCA	Commandement des fusiliers de l'air
CGS	Chief of General Staff
COFUSCO	Commandement des Fusiliers et Commandos
COS	Commandement des Operations Speciales
CT	Counter Terrorism
CTCC	Counter Terrorism Control Centre
DEFMIN	Defense Minister
DRM	French Military Intelligence agency
EU	European Union
FSK	Forsvarets Spesialkommando
GSIGN	French Gendarmerie
GSS	Israeli National Intelligence Agency
HJK	Hærrens Jegerkommando
IDF	Israeli Defense Forces
LIC	Low Intensity Conflict
MJK	Marinejegerkommandoen
MPL	Military Program Law
NAF	Norwegian Armed Forces
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NCTC	National Counter-Terrorism Committee
NICC	National Intelligence Coordination Committee
NJHQ	Norwegian Joint Headquarters
NMSE	National Military Staff Element

NORSOF	Norwegian SOF
PLO	Palestine Liberation Organization
S'13	Shayetet 13
SAS	Special Air Service
SBS	Special Boat Service
SFTC	Special Forces Training Centre
SO	Special Operations
SOCAUST	Commander SOCOMD
SOCOMD	Australian Special Operations Command
SOF	Special Operations Forces
SOHQ	Special Operations HQ
SOLS	SO Logistics Squadron
WMD	Weapons of Mass Destruction

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Organizations and their structure matter. They matter because organizations provide formal answers to some of the most universal human questions: who are “we” and who are “they”? Who gets resources—and resources of what type—and who does not? Who has power and what are legitimate ways for them to exercise it—and what are the consequences for stepping outside the bounds of that legitimacy?

Jessica Glicken Turnley<sup>1</sup>

### A. BACKGROUND

While it may seem to be a cliché to say that the strategic environment is totally different from the way it was two decades ago, it is nonetheless true. The harbingers of change are none other than the two watershed events—the dissolution of the Soviet Union (and by extension, the end of the Cold War) and the September 11 attacks. To say the least, the world as a whole has, in one way or another, been affected by both these events. Yet, the direct effects they had on countries around the world were quite different. For example, for most countries in the western hemisphere—such as France and Norway—the end of the Cold War meant a significant, or perhaps total, reduction of conventional threats in their strategic environment. On the other hand, for countries such as Israel, the effect was more indirect; the oil crisis in the 1970s probably played a more substantial role, while for Australia, it was not so much the end of the Cold War, but globalization that had a more substantial impact. The same holds for the September 11 attacks. Israel, for instance, had experienced terrorism and low intensity conflict (LIC) threats in its backyard since the 1970s.

Notwithstanding these differences, a common theme accepted by the world today is that the turn of the millennium marked the start of a “New World

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<sup>1</sup> Jessica G. Turnley, *Retaining a Precarious Value as Special Operations Go Mainstream* (Hurlburt Field, Florida: Joint Special Operations University, 2008), 9.

Disorder.”<sup>2</sup> The security conundrums in this new world disorder are aptly described by Michael Evans as he writes, “The new geopolitical reality is characterized by the arrival of a bifurcated international security system—a system that is split between a traditional 20th century state-centered paradigm and new 21st century sub-state and trans-state strata.”<sup>3</sup> The threats brought on by these new 21st century actors have been diffused, and, within them, terrorism and Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) threats are front and center. Against such a security backdrop, most, if not all, countries have come to acknowledge that Special Operations Forces (SOF) are key national instruments that can help resolve these challenges. Additionally, especially true in this day and age, SOF are often also a useful policy tool in maintaining alliances (e.g., NATO and the EU). Cumulatively, this gives SOF a new prominence as a unique and relevant national asset in this era.

Unfortunately, while this may be so in theory, not all countries have positioned themselves well to capitalize on having SOF. More precisely, not all countries have structured their SOF appropriately, in organizational terms, to fully optimize their employment and development. Arguably, getting the organization right may not be the foolproof solution; but it is no doubt a critical one. This view is reflected in the epigraph above, and is further reinforced by Morton Egeberg in the following: “Formal organization provides an administrative milieu that focuses a decision-maker’s attention on certain problems and solutions, while others are excluded from consideration. The structure thus constrains choices, but at the same time it creates and increases action capacity in certain directions”<sup>4</sup> In essence, organizations and their structure do matter.

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<sup>2</sup> Ian Ward, “Towards a Poethics of Terror,” *Law, Culture and the Humanities*, vol. 4 (2008): 252; Michael C. Hudson, “Imperial Headaches: Managing Unruly Regions in an Age of Globalization,” *Middle East Policy*, vol. 9 (2002): 73.

<sup>3</sup> Michael Evans, *The Tyranny of Dissonance: Australia’s Strategic Culture and Way of War 1901-2005* (Duntroon, Australia: Land Warfare Studies Centre, February 2005), 88.

<sup>4</sup> Morten Egeberg, “The Impact of Bureaucratic Structure on Policy Making,” *Public Administration*, vol. 77, no. 1 (1999): 159.

## B. PURPOSE AND APPROACH

In recognition of these realities, NATO commissioned a study in 2008, known as the NATO SOF Study, to provide NATO member nations with a “reference point to inform the continued optimization of national and NATO SOF.”<sup>5</sup> Suffice it to say, the study’s focus was on the organization of SOF. More importantly, this study is one of the few to focus on the organization of SOF in general and comparatively.<sup>6</sup> Most studies that concentrate on organization are specific to a country. Like the NATO SOF Study, this thesis attempts to also take the road less travelled. More precisely, it aims to expand on the good work done by the NATO study to answer, in a more comprehensive fashion, the following research question: *how should military SOF be organized to ensure that they can be an effective and relevant national instrument?*<sup>7</sup>

This research question is approached through a comparative case study method, with the following two objectives:

- To elucidate the strengths and weaknesses of different organizational models used by SOF, which in turn, will help to establish which model is optimal. Here, an organizational theory, known as the Congruence Model, is applied to four case studies where the strengths and weaknesses of each case and its organizational model are illuminated.
- To generate key considerations vis-à-vis the design and establishment of a national-level SOF organization. This involves

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<sup>5</sup> North Atlantic Treaty Organization Special Operations Coordination Center [NSCC], *North Atlantic Treaty Organization Special Operations Forces Study [NATO SOF Study]* (Mons, Belgium: NSCC, 2008), 3.

<sup>6</sup> Another scholarly work is the book *Special Operations and National Purpose* by Ross S. Kelly, but it does not specifically discuss the organization of SOF.

<sup>7</sup> To learn what the NATO study is about, see NSCC, *NATO SOF Study*. The study focuses mainly on providing a clear set of roles and responsibilities for each of the three organizational models it puts forth. Understandably, because the study relies mainly on primary source information, a lot of sensitive information is not disclosed. Hence, some parts of the study are not as explicit as one would prefer.

using the insights garnered from the case studies. The insights will be further distilled and generalized into design considerations.

At this juncture, it is necessary to explain why there are four case studies and what they are about. The key reason is that there are four broad ways in which SOF can be organized at the national level.<sup>8</sup> While it would be ideal to have more case studies for more robust results, time was the key limiting factor in this regard. Consequently, one case for each model has been chosen. The four organizational models this thesis investigates are: (1) Service-centric, (2) Special Operations (SO) National Military Staff Element (NMSE), (3) SO Component Command, and (4) SO Service.

The first model refers to the way SOF has traditionally been organized, which is purely by service lines without any joint oversight authority. The latter three are taken from the NATO SOF Study, and their respective characteristics are as follows:

- NMSE: In terms of structure, the SO staff element sits at the national military staff level. It is the focal point for the employment and development of SOF in the Ministry of Defense, with its primary role as the coordinator for all SO activities, plans, and requirements with agencies within and outside the military. In this design, the military SOF units are under the full Command and Control (C2) of their respective services, and the NMSE has no authoritative power over them. However, the NMSE does have operational control during special operations, but it does not have the capacity to control a joint special operation.<sup>9</sup> (See Appendix A for more details.)
- SO Component Command: In general, the Component Command can be seen as an expansion of the NMSE. It could either be an

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<sup>8</sup> What this means is that any model in the world today should resemble one of these four models.

<sup>9</sup> NSCC, *NATO SOF Study*, 22–4.

addition to the NMSE that SOF already has at the national military staff level or an enlarged staff element itself. Its status is similar to other joint Component Commands that a military has, such as a Maritime or Air Component Command. Its main role is to “work in concert with the military services to integrate and unify their service-specific SOF capabilities into an effective joint operational capability under unified command for the actual conduct of special operation.”<sup>10</sup> Similar to NMSE, the tactical SOF units are still under the administrative control of their services; however, the Component Command has the mandate to be involved in force management and production activities. A potential challenge of this model is to “balance the operational requirement for joint integration and unified command with the force management requirements of the parent services.”<sup>11</sup> (See Appendix B for more details.)

- SO Service: As the name implies, this model is about creating a separate SO service within the military. It gives the SO Commander full “authority, control, and resources necessary to optimize national SOF capabilities.”<sup>12</sup> However, as a service, the organization needs to now also take care of the raise-train-educate-sustain functions of SOF, besides the operational matters. This includes responsibility for the SO enabling personnel as well.<sup>13</sup> (See Appendix C for more details.)

To this end, this thesis will argue that the optimal organizational models for SOF are the SO Component Command and SO Service. The Service-centric and NMSE models should only be considered as transitory structures to help build up initial capabilities. Further, this thesis also submits that while

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<sup>10</sup> NSCC, *NATO SOF Study*, 25.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 24–7.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 27.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 27–9.

organizational structure is indeed a critical design factor, other key factors such as national strategy, military doctrine, and political-military culture must be taken into account with regard to the establishment of a national-level SOF organization. These factors form part of a larger set of design considerations this thesis analyzes in order to accomplish its second objective.

### **C. SCOPE**

In terms of scope, there are three key things to highlight. First, although already mentioned, it is worth emphasizing that this study is focused on SOF of military establishments only. It deals with SOF from the Navy, Army, and Air Force. Additionally, the organization that is being investigated is the macro-level structure, or what the NATO study calls the national-level organization. Second, to make this thesis as general and applicable as possible, the following three criteria are applied to the case selection: (1) SOF of small to medium-sized militaries, (2) selection of SOF from different parts of the world, and (3) availability of secondary sources of information. While this thesis strives to fulfill the first two criteria, the latter proved to be the key limiting factor in selecting the cases, leading to the selection of Israel as the Service-centric case; Norway as the NMSE case; France as the SO Component Command case; and Australia as the SO Service. Finally, as this thesis focuses on the organization and not on the operations of SOF per se, no need was seen to derive a standard set of definitions for SO and SOF. Rather, the definitions used by each country will suffice.

### **D. LIMITATION**

The greatest challenge for a non-classified study of this nature is that it relies solely on secondary, open-source information. Most SO and SOF today are still shrouded in secrecy. Having said that, it is fortunate that there have been some books and theses (mostly from the Naval Postgraduate School) that examine SOF organization. The flip side to the availability of this information is

that it is not necessarily current. I have thus also used supplementary sources of information from articles, news reports, government releases, and defense analysis reports (e.g., Jane's) to corroborate and verify the information presented when possible. Nevertheless, errors and omissions cannot be avoided. For this, I assume full responsibility.

## **E. THESIS OUTLINE**

Chapter II provides the details of the Congruence Model as well as the four-step analysis process that is applied to each case. Chapters III and IV are case study chapters; they are structured to fulfill the thesis's first objective. Chapter III concentrates on Israel as the Service-centric case and Norway for the NMSE case. Chapter IV focuses on France for the SO Component Command case and Australia for the SO Service case. Beyond illuminating the strengths and weaknesses of each model, these two chapters also draw insights from each case to inform the subsequent chapter. Chapter V, the concluding chapter, then uses these insights to further generate considerations that are essential to the design and establishment of a national-level SOF organization.

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## II. CONGRUENCE MODEL

The interrelated issue of military structure and effectiveness confronts planners and commanders with some of the most intractable intellectual issues associated with organizational behavior.<sup>14</sup>

Allan R. Millet and Williamson Murray

Getting organizations to operate effectively is difficult, however. Understanding one individual's behavior is challenging in and of itself; understanding a group that's made up of different individuals and comprehending the many relationships among those individuals is even more complex. Imagine, then, the mind-boggling complexity of a large organization made up of thousands of individuals and hundreds of groups with myriad relationships among these individuals and groups.<sup>15</sup>

David A. Nadler and Michael L. Tushman

It is uncommon to start off a chapter with two long quotes like those above, but they serve a purpose. At a minimum, they serve as a preface; beyond that, it is hoped that they help to indicate the complexity involved in studying and designing effective organizations. Suffice it to say, the task is anything but easy and straightforward. Fortunately, there are many "tools" available to leaders, managers, and researchers today to help them navigate the complex organizational terrain when they undertake this type of task. One such tool is the Congruence Model, an established and simple organizing framework developed by David A. Nadler and Michael L. Tushman.<sup>16</sup> As an organizing framework, this model acts more like a diagnostic than a measurement tool. It

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<sup>14</sup> Allan R. Millet and Williamson Murray, eds., *Military Effectiveness: The First World War Volume 1* (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1988), 1.

<sup>15</sup> David A. Nadler, Michael L. Tushman, and Nina G. Hatvany, *Managing Organizations: Readings and Cases* (Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1980), 35.

<sup>16</sup> Nadler, Tushman, and Hatvany, *Managing Organizations*, 36. As an organizing framework, the model represents a generic model (i.e., with broad components of Task, Individual, Formal Organization and Informal Organization inherent in every organization), and hence can be applied to any organization.

helps one to understand (and identify) the different interacting forces that affect the effectiveness of an organization.<sup>17</sup> More importantly, it can also help to establish considerations pertinent to the design of an effective organization. For these reasons, I have chosen this as the most appropriate model for this thesis. This chapter now introduces the model; it describes what the model is, how it works, and how it will be applied.

#### **A. WHAT IS IN OPEN SYSTEMS THEORY?**

Given that the basis for the Congruence Model lies in *Open Systems Theory*, this section examines the *theory* first, before discussing the model itself. As an open system, an organization is made up of a set of *interrelated elements*, which comprise the following broad categories: inputs, transformation process, outputs, and feedback (see Figure 1).<sup>18</sup> As a living organism, an organization is “*dependent* on the external environment to survive and is, therefore, *open* to *influences and transactions* with the outside world as long as they exist [emphasis mine].”<sup>19</sup> As illustrated in Figure 1, the main idea is that an organization draws its inputs from the environment, puts them through the transformation process, which yields the output at the other end. Also, because an organization is an *open system*, it interacts with the environment and these interactions appear in the form of feedback (e.g., the different loops in the diagram as shown).<sup>20</sup>

Beyond understanding the mechanics of systems theory, it is also important to be familiar with some of the system characteristics. For the purposes of this thesis, three are relevant. The first is *interdependence*. As the elements in

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<sup>17</sup> Oliver Wyman, “The Congruence Model: A Roadmap for Understanding Organizational Performance,” *Delta Organization & Leadership*, [http://www.oliverwyman.com/ow/pdf\\_files/Congruence\\_Model\\_INS.pdf](http://www.oliverwyman.com/ow/pdf_files/Congruence_Model_INS.pdf) (accessed August 21, 2010): 3–4.

<sup>18</sup> Nadler, Tushman, and Hatvany, *Managing Organizations*, 36.

<sup>19</sup> David P. Hanna, *Designing Organizations for High Performance* (New York: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1988), 8.

<sup>20</sup> Nadler, Tushman, and Hatvany, *Managing Organizations*, 36.

the system are interrelated, there is bound to be a degree of interdependence. This means that when one component of an organization changes, it produces “repercussions” that affect other parts, all because they are more or less connected. More important, this also means that, more often than not, there will be more than one factor that affects the effectiveness of an organization, although it may appear otherwise. Because these factors should not be seen in isolation, any investigation needs to be thorough.<sup>21</sup>

The second characteristic is *utilization of feedback*. According to David P. Hanna in his book *Designing Organizations for High Performance*, feedback allows the system to know whether it is on target. Hanna further categorizes feedback into two main types for organization studies, namely negative and positive feedback. Negative feedback is “deviation-correction feedback” since it helps the system to know if the output is “on course with the purpose and goals.”<sup>22</sup> In contrast, positive feedback is “deviation-amplifying feedback” because it “measures whether or not the purpose and goals are aligned with environmental needs.”<sup>23</sup> More important, he asserts that the need to differentiate and understand these two types of feedback is not just a matter of semantics; both can equally affect the survival of a system.<sup>24</sup> Although many organizations know the value and potential of these feedback loops, not all capitalize on them to improve their organizational effectiveness. This is clearly demonstrated by some of the cases this thesis examines.

The last characteristic is *adaptation*. A system will need to adapt to “maintain a favorable balance of input or output transactions with the environment or it will run down.”<sup>25</sup> Hence, how adaptable an organization is

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<sup>21</sup> Nadler, Tushman, and Hatvany, *Managing Organizations*, 37.

<sup>22</sup> Hanna, *Designing Organizations for High Performance*, 14.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>25</sup> Nadler, Tushman, and Hatvany, *Managing Organizations*, 37.

reflects the inner workings and effectiveness of that organization. This ability to adapt is especially critical today as the environment and its conditions can change so frequently and rapidly.

## B. WHAT IS THE CONGRUENCE MODEL?

Now that we understand the open system theory and how it works, we can discuss the congruence model proper. In this section, I describe and contextualize each and every component of the model vis-à-vis the focal points of this thesis. To do so, let us again consider Figure 1.

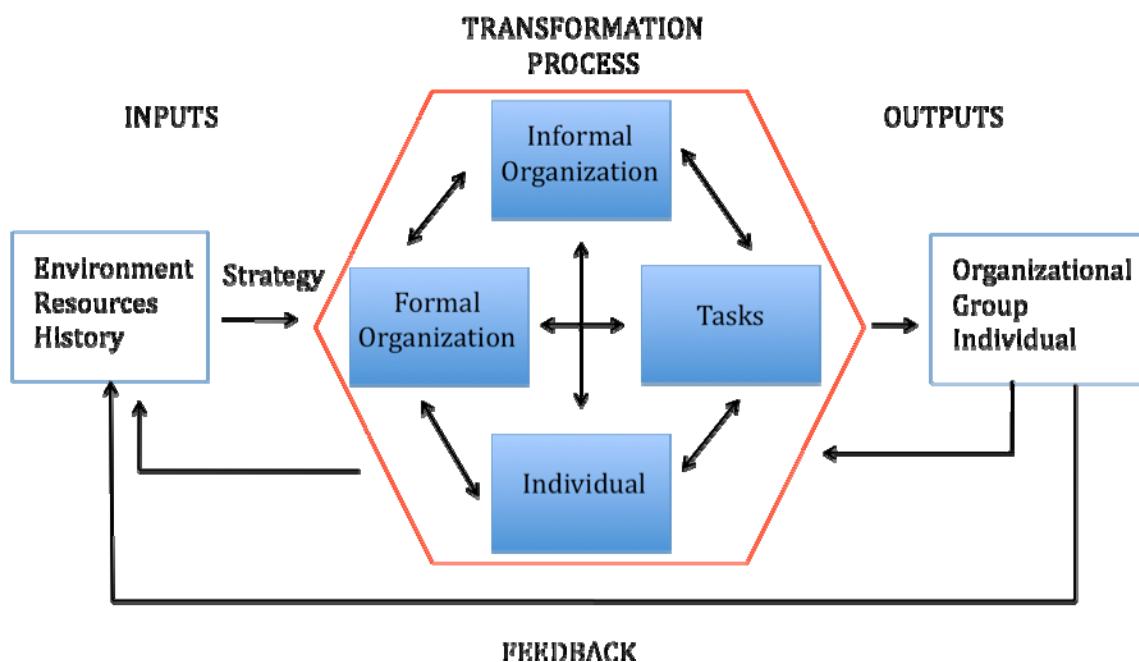


Figure 1. Congruence Model [From Nadler and Tushman, p. 44]

### 1. Inputs

On the left, we see four factors that, generally, constitute the “inputs” to an organization. These are: *Environment, Resources, History, and Strategy*. As Richard L. Daft writes in his book *Organization Theory and Design*, an organization’s *Environment* normally refers to “all elements that exist outside the boundary of an organization, and have the potential to affect all or part of the

organization.”<sup>26</sup> The *Environment* includes groups, other organizations, and also markets (such as the customer base) with which the organization interacts.<sup>27</sup> However, to be more specific, Daft further divides the *Environment* into two main categories, namely the *task* and *general* environments. The former contains groups that “have a direct impact on the organization’s ability to achieve its goals,” while the latter contains those that influence the organization only indirectly.<sup>28</sup> The focus in this thesis is on the *task* environment of the organization under investigation, namely the macro-level structure of the SO organization. Consequently, the *Environment* includes the threat environment of the country, the larger military organization to which SO belongs (this may include adjacent services, for instance when SO is a Service Command), the political master, and also the population from which it recruits.

The second input is *Resources*. This includes humans, technology, capital, and information. Since SO organizations draw most, if not all, of their resources (e.g., recruits and other personnel, as well as funding) through the larger military organization (even for a Service Command), this input is grouped together with the *Environment* in this study.

The third input is *History*. This refers to “the major stages or phases of an organization’s development over a period of time . . . [and includes] key strategic decisions, acts or behavior of key leaders, nature of past crises and the organization’s responses to them.”<sup>29</sup> How *History* affects the SO organization is largely a function of its relationship with either its larger military organization or the political master. Therefore, as with *Resources*, *History* is considered under *Environment*.

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<sup>26</sup> Richard L. Daft, *Organization Theory and Design 10<sup>th</sup> Edition* (Mason OH: South-Western Cengage Learning, 2008), 140.

<sup>27</sup> Nadler, Tushman, and Hatvany, *Managing Organizations*, 38.

<sup>28</sup> Daft, *Organization Theory and Design*, 140.

<sup>29</sup> Nadler, Tushman, and Hatvany, *Managing Organizations*, 39.

The final input is *Strategy*. According to Nadler and Tushman, strategy may be the most critical input for some organizations. This is because “[*Strategy*] determines the work to be performed by the organization and it defines the desired organizational outputs.”<sup>30</sup> In short, *Strategy* refers to how the organization matches its resources to the prevailing environment; it comprises key decisions like the mission and purpose of the organization, services to be provided to the market, and output objectives.<sup>31</sup> From the SO macro-organization’s perspective, *Strategy* is synonymous with military doctrine, and all the associated government policies and legislation (e.g., Defense White Papers) governing the employment of SOF.<sup>32</sup>

In sum, the inputs can be simplified into just two main components—the *Environment* (to include *Resources* and *History*) and *Strategy*. Of note, these two components, either collectively or singly, will exact demands, impose constraints, and also provide opportunities for SO organizations.<sup>33</sup>

## 2. Transformation Process

The centerpiece in Figure 1 (on p. 12), also known as the *Transformation Process*, represents the core of the congruence model. It contains the four generic components that describe most, if not all, organizations. They are: *Tasks*, *Individuals*, *Formal Organization*, and *Informal Organization*. According to Michael B. McCaskey, *Tasks* are the essential work carried out by an organization and its sub-units to produce goods and services, and they involve interactions and interdependencies among these sub-units to accomplish the

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<sup>30</sup> Nadler, Tushman, and Hatvany, *Managing Organizations*, 40.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 39–40.

<sup>32</sup> Wyman, “The Congruence Model,” 7. This paper asserts that “for government and non-profit organizations, ‘corporate strategy’ often reflects a combination of the legislative mandate, which defines the public-policy objectives the organization has been created to address, and organization-specific priorities.”

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 6. Wyman’s paper asserts that only the environment will exact demands, impose constraints, and provide opportunities for the organization. In contrast, this thesis deems that all the input elements are capable of doing so.

objectives.<sup>34</sup> Because technology is often a key enabler or multiplier for these tasks, especially in the case of SO, this thesis considers technology a part of the *Tasks* component.<sup>35</sup>

The next component is *Individuals*, which refers to the humans who perform the organizational tasks. Critical to take into account are things like a person's knowledge and skills, needs and preferences, and perceptions and expectations.<sup>36</sup> In this thesis, this component is termed *Human Capital*, as this more completely represents how human assets should be viewed.

The third component is *Formal Organization*, which refers to "the range of structures, processes, methods, procedures and so forth that are explicitly and formally developed to get individuals to perform tasks consistent with organizational strategy."<sup>37</sup> For McCaskey, the *Formal Organization* also includes other management and control aspects such as rewards, training, development and selection mechanisms.<sup>38</sup> Some authors in the field of organization studies prefer the term "Structure" to *Formal Organization*. Because the focal point for this study is the macro-level structure of the SO organization, this thesis likewise uses the term *Structure* in place of *Formal Organization* to help make the correlation more obvious.

The final component is *Informal Organization*, defined as a set of informal and unwritten arrangements that co-exist alongside the formal structure, and comprise the "patterns of processes, practices, and political relationships" that embody "the values, beliefs, and accepted behavioral norms of the individuals"

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<sup>34</sup> Michael B. McCaskey, "Framework for Analyzing Work Groups" (Harvard Business School, case 9-480-009, August 15, 1996), 6.

<sup>35</sup> Carl W. Stiner, "US Special Operations Forces: A Strategic Perspective," *Parameters*, Summer (1992): 11-2. *General Stiner asserts that technology is a critical component of special operations as it can be "decisive in offsetting the enemy's superiority in numbers, firepower and mobility."*

<sup>36</sup> Nadler, Tushman, and Hatvany, *Managing Organizations*, 41-2.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 42.

<sup>38</sup> McCaskey, "Framework for Analyzing Work Groups," 7.

working in the organization.<sup>39</sup> These informal arrangements can either complement or challenge the formal structure, and, as such, can affect the organization's performance either positively or negatively.<sup>40</sup> In the field of organization studies, these implicit forces are sometimes also known as *Organizational Culture*. They can have a disproportionate effect on the effectiveness of a SO organization.

According to Edgar H. Schein, *Organizational Culture* is:

the deeper level of *basic assumptions* and *beliefs* that are shared by members of an organization, that operate unconsciously, and that define in a basic 'take-for-granted' fashion an organization's view of itself and its environment. These assumptions and beliefs are *learned* responses to a group's problems of *survival* in its external environment and its problems of *internal integration*.<sup>41</sup>

As Schein points out, the environment "influences the formation of culture [initially], but once culture is present in the sense of shared assumptions, those assumptions, in turn, influence what will be perceived and defined as the environment."<sup>42</sup> In addition to having this influence on perception, Vijay Sathe submits that culture also has a powerful effect on attitudes and behavior, as these are the products of internalized beliefs and values (he calls them shared assumptions).<sup>43</sup> Meanwhile, according to James B. Quinn, Henry Mintzberg, and Robert M. James,

Culture is not an article of fashion, but an intrinsic part of a deeper organizational character . . . Culture thus permeates many critical aspects of strategy making. But perhaps the most crucial realm is the way people are chosen, developed, nurtured, interrelated, and rewarded in the organization. The kinds of people attracted to an

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<sup>39</sup> Wyman, "The Congruence Model," 9.

<sup>40</sup> Nadler, Tushman, and Hatvany, *Managing Organizations*, 42.

<sup>41</sup> Edgar H. Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership: A Dynamic View* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1985), 6.

<sup>42</sup> Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, 51.

<sup>43</sup> Vijay Sathe, *Culture and Related Corporate Realities: Test, Cases, and Readings on Organizational Entry, Establishment, and Change* (Howewood, IL: Richard D. Irwin Inc., 1985), 13.

organization and the way they can mostly deal with problems and each other are largely a function of the culture a company builds – and the practices and systems which support it.<sup>44</sup>

For practical reasons, this thesis adopts the term *Culture* as these authors use it, in place of *Informal Organization*.

### 3. Outputs

The final segment of the model to be described is *Outputs*. Broadly speaking, *Outputs* refers to anything that the “organization produces, how it performs or how effective it is.”<sup>45</sup> Consequently, *Outputs* should not only refer to the organization’s basic products, but should also include outputs at different system levels, such as the performance of groups and individuals, which ultimately can also affect the overall organization’s effectiveness. To this end, three factors are essential when assessing an organization’s effectiveness: (1) goal attainment, (2) resource utilization, and (3) adaptability.<sup>46</sup> In this vein, Erik Jansen reminds us that an organization’s goals should not be focused only on outputs as a final product, but should also target the inputs (system’s resources) or processes (transformation process). He adds that when evaluating internal process effectiveness, the factors to be taken into account should include human relationships and emphasis by the leadership (unity of effort), as well as economic efficiency (outputs vs inputs, which is similar to resource utilization). In other words, the indicators that can be used are (but not limited to): work climate/culture, teamwork and group loyalty, trust and communication processes, and the reward and development system.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> James B. Quinn, Henry Mintzberg, and Robert M. James, *The Strategy Process: Concepts, Contexts and Cases* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1988), 344.

<sup>45</sup> Wyman, “The Congruence Model,” 7.

<sup>46</sup> Nadler, Tushman, and Hatvany, *Managing Organizations*, 40.

<sup>47</sup> Erik Jansen, “A Synthesis of Hanna and Daft” (Powerpoint lecture for Organization Design at Naval Postgraduate School (NPS), Monterey, CA, April 2010). Erik Jansen is a professor teaching Organization Design Theory at the NPS.

Table 1 provides a summary of all the components in the *Transformation Process*. It includes the critical aspects of each component, which will be examined in the analysis to follow.

Component	Tasks	Individual/ Human Capital	Formal Organization/ Structure	Informal Organization/ Culture
Definition	The essential work to be done by organization and its parts	Characteristics of the individuals in the organization	Various formal structures, and processes created to accomplish goals	Informal arrangements including processes and relationships
Key features for analysis	1. Types of skill and knowledge demanded by the work	1. Knowledge, motivation, and skills of individuals	1. Organization design such as structure, sub-units, and coordination and control mechanisms	1. Leader behavior
	2. Types of rewards provided by the work	2. Individuals' needs and preferences	2. Job design	2. Intra- and inter-group relationships
	3. Degree of Inter-dependence	3. Perceptions and expectations	3. Work environment (e.g., geographical location)	3. Informal working arrangements
	4. Constraints on work imposed by strategy	4. Background (e.g., volunteers or conscripts)	4. Human resource management systems	4. Communication and influence patterns

Table 1. Summary of Transformation Process [After Nadler and Tushman, p. 41]

### C. HOW DOES THE MODEL WORK?

Having understood the components of the model, it is now time to answer the question, how does it work? For people who are familiar with the concept of

“Strategy” (or “Grand Strategy”), the model’s premise in assessing an organization’s effectiveness should not be anything new as it is somewhat similar to this concept. Basically, strategy is “the art of connecting aspirations with prudent plans and finite resources.”<sup>48</sup> Or, simply put, it is all about “align[ing] ends, ways, and means.”<sup>49</sup> In a similar fashion, what this model is concerned with is the congruence or alignment of each of the components with all the others, including *Environment* and *Strategy*. The greater the congruence—or the tighter the “fit”—the more effective is the organization.<sup>50</sup> This simple and yet powerful idea is best illustrated by the following analogy offered by a noted systems theorist, Russell Ackoff:

Suppose you could build a dream car that included the styling of a Jaguar, the power plant of a Porsche, the suspension of a BMW, and the interior of a Rolls Royce. Put them together and what have you got? Nothing. They weren’t designed to go together. They don’t “*Fit*”.<sup>51</sup> [emphasis mine]

Although the congruence model might seem easy and intuitive to apply, the truth is far from what it appears. As the epigraphs that introduce this chapter make clear, the task of analyzing an organization’s effectiveness is often complicated and arduous. While things can be made more manageable with the help of the model, the task can still be convoluted. Hence, what seems most prudent is to get inside the analytic process and lay out the critical steps involved in the tasks ahead, so that readers can better appreciate how the “ends” (in this case, the considerations) are to be generated.

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<sup>48</sup> Shawn Brimley, “Crafting Strategy in an Age of Transition,” *Parameters*, Winter (2008–09): 28.

<sup>49</sup> John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of American National Security Policy during the Cold War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), viii.

<sup>50</sup> Wyman, “The Congruence Model,” 9.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

## **D. OPERATIONALIZING THE CONGRUENCE MODEL**

Here is a description of the four-step process adopted from Nadler and Tushman's eight-step method:

### **1. Identify Symptoms**

The first thing to do when examining a case is to gather all the symptomatic data, i.e., the symptoms of the problems. These symptoms may not be the real problems or the causes, but they help shine a light on where else to look for more data if necessary.

To identify the symptoms, the analysis needs to identify the indicators that can be used. For this, the literature review has provided some guidance. In addition to indicators of mission success, there are also other aspects like intra- and inter-group relationships between SOF and other service cultures, the reward system, and the training and development system. These indicators should be measured against the desired or planned "outputs" of the organization to assess "fit."

### **2. Describe Organizational Components**

During this step, the process begins to trace the causes of the problems. Data are collected on the four organizational components and their respective key features (see Table 1).

### **3. Assess Congruence (or Fit)**

Using the data, the congruence of each component with all the other parts is established. Here, wherever misalignments (or problems) occur, they will be illuminated. As the focal point for this thesis is the macro-structure of the SO organization, more attention will be paid to try to identify any misalignment associated with the *Structure* of the organization. However, the thesis does not

discount or dismiss other misalignments as they are still important in helping to generate considerations that are essential to a good organizational design.

#### 4. Generate Insights and Considerations

After assessing congruence, it is necessary to relate the results back to the symptoms. From these “trails,” one can see where all the misalignments (or alignments for that matter) are that contribute to the problem(s). In the final analysis, the considerations can then be generated.<sup>52</sup>

In the following two chapters, the adapted model shown in Figure 2, together with the four-step process, will be applied to all four case studies. The aim, again, is to generate useful insights that are pertinent to the design of a macro-level SO organization for optimal SOF employment and development. Subsequently, these insights will be further distilled and processed into considerations to be presented in the final chapter.

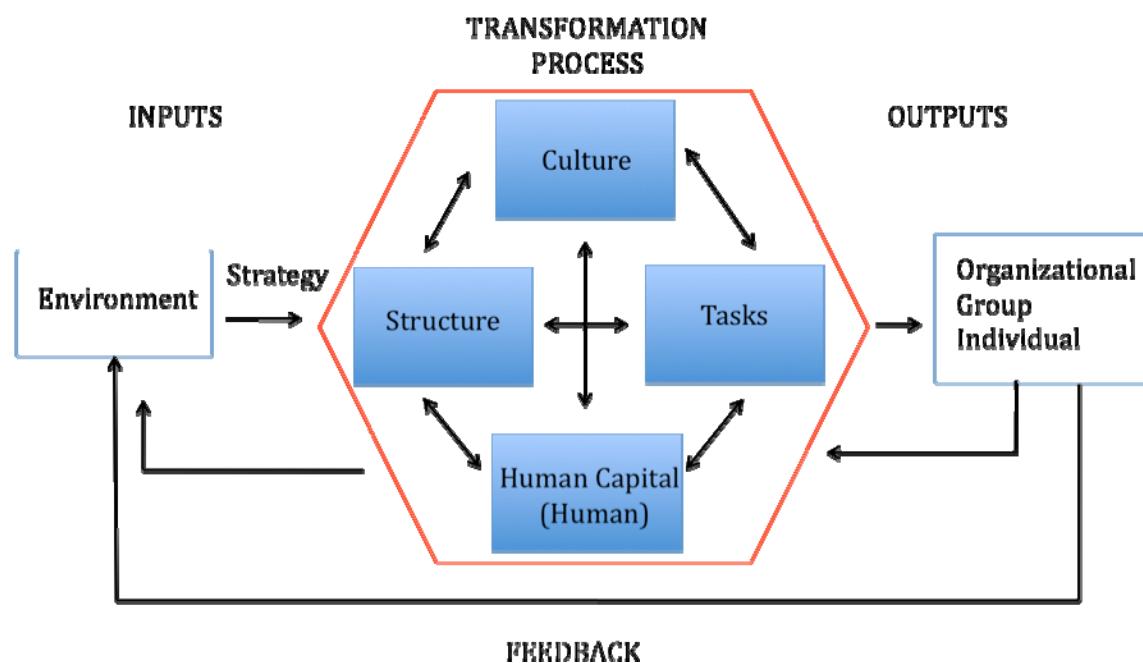


Figure 2. Adapted Congruence Model

<sup>52</sup> Nadler, Tushman, and Hatvany, *Managing Organizations*, 45-46.

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### III. SERVICE-CENTRIC AND NMSE CONSTRUCTS: LESSONS FROM ISRAEL AND NORWAY

#### A. INTRODUCTION

In the preceding chapter, I explained the Congruence Model and the four-step process. They are applied in the next two chapters to the case studies. Since this is the introductory chapter to the case studies, it is imperative that I also explain how the studies are organized. Each case study first presents the case's peculiarities via the Congruence Model, which involves applying the first two steps of the four-step process. This requires describing the relevant *Environment* and *Strategy* as they impact SOF's effectiveness.<sup>53</sup> The case analyses then explain the outcome of the “traces” between components of the Model to show important (mis)alignments, before concluding with lessons learned from the analysis. Further, to help readers become familiar with the use of the Model and the process, the Israeli case will be examined in greater depth; doing so should demonstrate how a full-blown study can be done using these analytical tools. Because it is not necessary to go into such depth for every case for the purposes of this thesis, readers will see some differences in the level of details offered for Israel and the subsequent cases.

This chapter uses Israel and Norway as case studies of two organizational constructs: the Service-centric and the National Military Staff Element (NMSE), respectively. In these constructs, the military services continue to retain the full command and control (C2) of their respective SOF, which includes their long-term development and planning. This is in spite of SOF's expanded political utility, whence SOF have been used for national-strategic reasons beyond the purview of the individual services.

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<sup>53</sup> What this means is that, for example, when I look at the *Transformation Process*, consisting of *Structure*, *Tasks*, *Human Capital*, and *Culture* for SOF, I will be describing the identified weaknesses associated with each organizational component, as well as their relationships with other components in the system to establish the linkages.

What these two case studies will reveal is that both kinds of structure are inadequate in terms of acting as the overarching organization for SOF. They point to a need for an oversight authority for the long-term interests of SOF and to maximize the latter's strategic utility. However, such a body would need to be endowed with the requisite power to orient, harmonize, and integrate the various tactical SOF units in order to be effective. Furthermore, insofar as SOF are considered strategic assets, these two cases also underscore the importance of having clear strategic guidance on the employment and development of SOF. Absent such guidance from the national leadership, the least the military should do is to ensure a clear division of labor between the different forces.

## **B. ISRAEL**

To say that Israel was born in war is no exaggeration. Including the War of Independence from 1947–1949, Israel has engaged in “no less than six full-scale wars with its Arab neighbors.”<sup>54</sup> Although disadvantaged in many ways, Israel has by most counts come out on top in these encounters. This is by no means due to luck, but to Israeli supremacy in its conventional military power. More importantly, this military supremacy in the conventional realm helps Israel mitigate the traditional threats that it faces from its Arab neighbors; so much so that, by the early 1980s, these threats were no longer seen as imminent.<sup>55</sup> However, while traditional threats dwindled, new threats emerged and came to dominate Israel’s security agenda. These were Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) and Low-Intensity Conflict (LIC). These changes in the strategic environment, together with other changes that have taken or are taking place on economic, political, and social fronts, pose numerous challenges to the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) as it enters the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Paradoxically, for Israeli SOF, the sources of its organizational problems lie not with these new changes, but

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<sup>54</sup> David Rodman, *Defense and Diplomacy in Israel’s National Security Experience: Tactics, Partnerships, and Motives* (Portland: Sussex Academic Press, 2005), 1.

<sup>55</sup> Mark A. Heller, *Continuity and Change in Israeli Security Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press Inc., 2000), 20–4.

rather with factors that are resistant to change. The latter are to be found predominantly in the areas of political-military relations and the IDF's organizational culture. As we shall see, the confluence of these two factors leads to several problems that affect Israeli SOF. The most critical is the failure to *adapt* the macro-organization of Israeli SOF to the prevailing environment. As a result, the Service-centric macro-structure becomes a thoroughfare for problems at the strategic level that are then passed on to the operational and tactical levels, thereby demonstrating how ineffective this structure is as an overarching organization for SOF.

## 1. Environment

### a. Threat

According to Nicholas Spykman, "it is the geographic location of a country...that define[s] its problem of security." Therefore, a key factor that influences a state's threat assessment is the state's position in space, which is part of its physical geography.<sup>56</sup> Implicit in this is the kind of relationship a state has with its immediate neighbors. In Israel's case, its war-ridden history with its Arab neighbors speaks volumes about its strategic threat environment. In a space of less than four decades, Israel has waged no less than six full-scale wars with its Arab neighbors: War of Independence (1947–1949), Suez War (1956), Six-Day War (1967), War of Attrition (1969–1970), Yom Kippur War (1973), and the First Lebanon War (1982).<sup>57</sup> More importantly, Israel waged these wars for one sole purpose, which was to defend its right to survive. Hence, it is not surprising that Israel's early leaders always viewed the conventional

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<sup>56</sup> Emily O. Goldman, "New Threats, New Identities and New Ways of War: The Sources of Change in National Security Doctrine," in *Israel's National Security Towards The 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, ed. Uri Bar-Joseph (London: Frank Cass, 2001), 57.

<sup>57</sup> Michael C. Desch, *Power and Military Effectiveness: The Fallacy of Democratic Triumphalism* (Baltimore, Maryland: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008), 96.

threats posed by its immediate neighbors as its fundamental security threats (*bitachon yisodi*).<sup>58</sup> The statement below is indicative of the sentiments of these early leaders:

In our case it is not only a matter of securing our independence, our territory, our borders, the regime – but securing our very physical existence. Our enemies do not conspire only against our territory and our independence; we should have no delusions in regard to this matter. They intend, as many of them have openly said, to throw us into the sea: put simply, to annihilate every Jew in the Land of Israel.<sup>59</sup>

This notion that Israel's existence is at stake is the first of three fundamental security assumptions made by Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion when he was in power. These assumptions formed the basis for Israel's early pre-occupation with conventional threats, but they began to be challenged by both leaders and the populace after the 1967 war. The political and social fault lines formed after 1967 became even more apparent after the 1973 war, and more so still after the first (1982) Lebanon war.<sup>60</sup>

The conventional power supremacy that Israel wielded over its neighbors, buttressed by two watershed events that took place on the world stage before the turn of the 21st century, helped to significantly reduce the likelihood of Israel being drawn into a conventional war. The first of these events was the oil crisis in the 1970s, which allowed Israel to close its "material gaps" with its Arab neighbors, which further led to Egypt and Jordan becoming

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<sup>58</sup> Sergio Catignani, *Israeli Counter-Insurgency and The Intifadas: Dilemmas of a Conventional Army* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 47.

<sup>59</sup> Ze'ev Drory, *Israel's Reprisal Policy 1953-1956: The Dynamics of Military Retaliation* (London: Frank Cass, 2005), 41. This statement is made by Israel's founding father, David Ben Gurion.

<sup>60</sup> Ariel Levite, *Offense and Defense in Israeli Military Doctrine* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1990), 27–33; Heller, *Continuity and Change in Israeli Security Policy*, 36-39. The three assumptions are: (1) Israel's existence is at stake, (2) Israel will always be quantitatively inferior to the Arab states in terms of material resources, as well as territorial depth, (3) Israel will not be able to decide the conflict through military means.

signatories to the peace agreements in 1979 and 1994 respectively.<sup>61</sup> These peace agreements helped to mitigate the threats on Israel's immediate southern and eastern fronts. The second watershed event was the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, which stripped Syria of its main sponsor. As a result, Syria's increasingly obsolete military capabilities and its inability to modernize them meant that Israel no longer had to worry about this remaining conventional threat from the north.<sup>62</sup> While threats in the conventional realm continued to lessen from the 1980s onwards, the security situation in other arenas took a turn for the worse. Specifically, LIC and WMD threats came to take the place of these conventional concerns on Israel's security agenda as the latter faded into oblivion.

Before the first Lebanon War in 1982, Israel regarded LIC threats as "current security threats" (*bitachon shotef*), since they were considered more tactically than strategically threatening.<sup>63</sup> In the 1960s and 70s, these attacks were normally small-scale infiltrations or terrorist kidnappings and hijackings. To Israel's leaders, "terrorism hurts, it is annoying and disruptive, but it does not constitute a threat to the country's very existence."<sup>64</sup> To counter these threats, the Israeli government looked to its military elites for solutions, and the answers were often in the form of high profile retaliatory operations.<sup>65</sup> These actions, although not always successful, were sufficiently adequate to appease the

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<sup>61</sup> The Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty was signed in 1979, while the Israeli-Jordanian peace agreement was signed in 1994. See Gal Luft, "All Quiet on the Eastern Front? Israel's National Security Doctrine After the Fall of Saddam," *Analysis Paper*, no. 2 (Washington, DC: Saban Center for Middle East Policy, March 2004).

<sup>62</sup> Mehmet Okan Arikán, *Transformation of the Israeli Defense Forces: An Application of the U.S. Military Transformation?* (Monterey, CA: Naval Postgraduate School, December 2004), 32-7.

<sup>63</sup> David Rodman, "Israel's National Security Doctrine: An Appraisal of the Past and a Vision of the Future," *Israel Affairs*, vol. 9, no. 4 (2003): 117.

<sup>64</sup> "Rabin Addresses Knesset on Terrorism," *Foreign Broadcast Information Service*, October 21, 1985, 16.

<sup>65</sup> Simon Reeve, *One Day in September: The Full Story of the 1972 Munich Olympics Massacre and The Israeli Revenge Operation "Wrath of God"* (New York: Arcade, 2000), 1-19; Yechiel Gutman, *A Storm in the GSS* (Tel Aviv: Yedioth Ahronot, 1995), 17.

electorate and keep the situation under control. However, these LIC threats started to take on a different form with the first Lebanon War in 1982.

Near the end of the 1970s, attacks carried out by the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) from Southern Lebanon began to increase in number and intensity. This infuriated the hawkish Israeli government under Prime Minister Menachem Begin, in which Ariel Sharon was Defense Minister and Rafael Eitan was Chief of Staff (COS). They began to view the PLO as an existential threat for the first time in Israel's history. By doing so, policymakers "lowered the threshold for conflict to a level that ultimately made going to war a much greater probability."<sup>66</sup> As a result, Israel went to full-scale war in Southern Lebanon, a conflict which came to be known as the 1982 Lebanon War. Incidentally, besides being the first time LIC was seen as an existential threat, this was also the first time Israel engaged in a "war of choice".

This decision to engage in a war of choice represented a departure from Israel's early fundamental principles; hence, it further aggravated the fault lines in the political and social consensus that had formed after the 1967 war.<sup>67</sup> More importantly, the Lebanon War incensed and radicalized many Islamic groups against Israel. Chief among them was Hezbollah (or "The Party of God"). What was worse for Israel was that even after the war ended, the attacks from Islamic groups in Lebanon continued to grow in lethality and sophistication from the 1980s to the present. This, ultimately, culminated in the Second Lebanon War in 2006.<sup>68</sup>

Unbeknownst to Israel, a similar form of LIC was gestating in its backyard while it was fighting the threat in South Lebanon. Known as the *Intifada*, this other LIC would soon be waged by Palestinians living in the

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<sup>66</sup> Catignani, *Israeli Counter-Insurgency and The Intifadas*, 64.

<sup>67</sup> Reuven Pedatzur, "Ben-Gurion's Enduring Legacy," in *Security Concerns: Insights from the Israeli Experience*, ed. Daniel Bar-Tal et al. (London: JAI Press, 1998), 153.

<sup>68</sup> Nicholas Blanford, "Hezbollah attacks force Israel to take a hard look at Lebanon," *Jane's Intelligence Review*, vol. 11, no. 4 (1999), 32–7; Catignani, *Israeli Counter-Insurgency and The Intifadas*, 187–194.

occupied territories. The first *Intifada* occurred in December 1987, and the second in October 2000. The structural under-development of the Gaza Strip and West Bank, coupled with the unfair treatment meted out by the Military Government administering the territories, subjected the Palestinians to dire living conditions. This, in turn, fostered a sense of injustice and antagonism and gave Palestinians a “particular [sense of] consciousness and identity” that coalesced in a united front against the Israeli occupation.<sup>69</sup> The spark that set off the first large-scale uprising came on December 9, 1987 during a funeral-protest ceremony in the Jabalya refugee camp.<sup>70</sup>

As the *Intifada* developed, because of Israel’s excessive use of force, Israel unwittingly contributed to the growth of new terrorist groups in the territories, much as had happened during the first Lebanon War. Among the radical groups that emerged were Hamas (means “strength and bravery” in Arabic), Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), along with PLO-affiliated groups (such as Force 17).<sup>71</sup> The *Intifada* went on for six years before some form of order was restored in the Territories under the auspices of the Oslo Peace Accord in 1993.

However, despite the peace accord, peace remained elusive between the “two states.” Things finally came to a head, again, in October 2000, when both parties could not agree on the final-status agreement of the peace accord. This then led to a second round of “uprisings” in the territories, known as the *Al-Aqsa Intifada* (or more commonly, the *Second Intifada*). The new terrorist

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<sup>69</sup> Joost R. Hilterman, *Behind the Intifada: Labor and Women’s Movements in the Occupied Territories* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 33.

<sup>70</sup> Arie Shalev, *The Intifada: Causes and Effects* (Tel Aviv: Papirus, 1990), 32–33.

<sup>71</sup> Mark Tessler, “The impact of the Intifada on Israeli Political Thinking,” in *Echoes of the Intifada on Israeli Political Thinking: Regional Repercussions of the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict*, ed. Rex Brynen and Neil Caplan (Oxford: Westview Press, 1991), 49.

groups were actively involved in this *Second Intifada*.<sup>72</sup> In spite of Israeli efforts to get these threats under control over the past decade, the conflicts between the two sides remain unremitting until the present day.<sup>73</sup>

As the LIC and terrorism threats were growing in the 1980s and 1990s, another major development was underway in the arena of ballistic missiles and WMD. Not only was there a proliferation of missiles, but also of WMD materials in the Middle East region. This became a major concern for Israeli policy makers for two reasons: first, Israel was extremely vulnerable due to its “small size and highly concentrated population and industry.” Second, more distant states could now attack Israel “without the need to join a coalition including states contiguous to Israel.”<sup>74</sup> In addition, policy makers were also worried about weapons from the former Soviet falling into rogue hands to be used against Israel. Consequently, the threats from this arena were also elevated and were seen as existential.<sup>75</sup>

In sum, the threats that Israel has faced spread across the full spectrum from low to high intensity, and can be viewed in terms of circles: the inner ring comprises LIC threats from the Israeli-Palestinian conflicts, as well as from Southern Lebanon. The second ring contains the conventional threats from Israel’s immediate neighbors. The third and last ring is composed of hostile states that have no common border with Israel, but can threaten it with missiles

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<sup>72</sup> Catignani, *Israeli Counter-Insurgency and The Intifadas*, 99-106. The *Al-Aqsa Intifada* was, to a large degree, an attempt to replicate Hezbollah’s success against Israel in Lebanon in May 2000. Its aim was to force Israel to withdraw unilaterally from the Territories through the use of violence. According to Marwan Barghouti, a senior PLO leader, “the thinking of the entire new Palestinian generation is influenced by the experiences of our brothers in *Hizbullah* and by Israel’s retreat from Lebanon ... I must say that Israel’s withdrawal from Lebanon was indeed one contributing factor to the [Al-Aqsa] Intifada.” More importantly, the second intifada saw terrorist groups like Hamas and the PLO-affiliated groups work closely with Hezbollah and state sponsors like Iran. Hezbollah and IRGCN trained Israel’s opponents on the guerilla tactics that were employed during the conflict.

<sup>73</sup> “Who are Hamas?” *BBC News*, January 4, 2009, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle\\_east/1654510.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/1654510.stm) (accessed February 10, 2011).

<sup>74</sup> Heller, *Continuity and Change in Israeli Security Policy*, 31.

and WMD. Today, according to Israel's threat perception, the two non-conventional threats, WMD and LIC, are the top two security concerns for the country. More disconcerting for Israel, the players involved, namely Hamas, Hezbollah, Syria, and Iran, do not just operate singly, but also collaborate with one another or with other international terrorist groups. In such a threat environment, Israeli SOF are not only relevant, but have become increasingly important as Israel's political, social, and economic conditions also continue to evolve.<sup>76</sup>

***b. Political-Military Relationship***

Few democracies in the world have Israel's same kind of political-military relationship, whereby the military wields a dominant influence over defense decision-making, as well as policy-making processes. Essentially, there is no clear distinction between the political and the military spheres.<sup>77</sup> Ironically, David Ben-Gurion, the founding father of Israel who always thought that the

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<sup>75</sup> I Heller, *Continuity and Change in Israeli Security Policy*, 30-32; Arikan, *Transformation of the Israeli Defense Forces*, 42-7. See Arikan's work for a detailed description of the WMD weapons possessed by the different states surrounding Israel.

<sup>76</sup> Yiftah S. Shapir, "Non-Conventional Solutions for Non-Conventional Dilemmas?" in *Israel's National Security Towards The 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, ed. Uri Bar-Joseph (London: Frank Cass, 2001), 147; Heller, *Continuity and Change in Israeli Security Policy*, 49; "Arab-Israeli activist convicted of spying for Hezbollah gets 9 years in prison," *Jane's Defense & Security Intelligence & Analysis*, January 31, 2011, <http://search.janes.com.libproxy.nps.edu/Search> (accessed February 10, 2011); Shmulik Hadad, "Qassam Lands in Western Negev, No Injuries," *Ynet News*, November 20, 2008, <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3626260,00.html> (accessed February 10, 2011).

<sup>77</sup> Charles D. Freilich, "National Security Decision-making in Israel: Processes, Pathologies, and Strengths," *The Middle East Journal*, vol. 60, no. 4 (2006): 635; Stuart A. Cohen, "The Israel Defense Forces (IDF): From a 'People's Army' to a 'Professional Military'—Causes and Implications," *Armed Forces & Society*, vol. 21, no. 2 (1995): 248. According to the authors, the IDF is so pervasive in the Israeli system because of the predominant security concerns confronting Israel and its people.

military should be distinctly separated from the political sphere,<sup>78</sup> unwittingly planted the seeds that yielded the political-military relationship we see today. Three of those seeds are: (1) the *bitchonist* (“securitist”) orientation that makes the IDF a critical part of the Israeli system, (2) the “purge system” that results in the “parachute” syndrome by which retiring young military officers seek government careers,<sup>79</sup> and (3) the deliberate effort to keep the relationship vague to allow his personal control.

During Israel’s founding years, Ben-Gurion was able to instill in the populace a view that the Arab threat was intractable and of a zero-sum type. As such, he was able to make security and the state’s survival the central themes in the nation’s affairs, which then turned Israel into a “nation-in-arms.”<sup>80</sup> For Ben-Gurion, “the term security...included not only military organizations, but also anything associated with the survival, defense and development of Israel.”<sup>81</sup> More importantly, in his view society as a whole was responsible for Israel’s independence and existence; every citizen was to partake in the “nation-building”

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<sup>78</sup> Yoram Peri, “Civilian Control During a Protracted War,” in *Politics and Society in Israel: Studies in Israeli Society* Vol. 3, ed. Ernest Krausz (Oxford: Transaction Books, 1985), 363. According to Ben Gurion: “The military does not determine the policy, the regime, the laws and the government-rulings in the state. The army itself does not even determine its own structure, regulations and ways of operation, nor does it decide upon peace and war. The military is the executive branch, the defense and security of the Israeli government...The military is subordinate to the government, and is no more than the executor of the political line and the orders received from the legislative and executive institution of the state.”

<sup>79</sup> Catignani, *Israeli Counter-Insurgency and The Intifadas*, 32-4; Uri Ben-Eliezer, “From Military Role-Expansion to Difficulties in Peace-Making: The Israel Defense Forces 50 Years On,” in *Military, State and Society in Israel: Theoretical and Comparative Perspective*, ed. Daniel Maman, Eyal Ben-Ari, and Zeev Rosenhek (New Brunswick: Transition Publishers, 2001), 148–9. Ben-Gurion and then Chief Of Staff Moshe Dayan developed the “purge system” that deliberately limited the number of years an officer could serve in the IDF. This resulted in high officer turnover with many retiring by their early to mid-forties. Because of early retirement, many officers had to look ahead to their own civilian career; a second political/government career definitely proved attractive. This, consequently, gave rise to the “parachute syndrome;” the military became a platform from which senior military officers could transit into a second career in politics/government.

<sup>80</sup> Uri Ben-Eliezer, *The Making of Israeli Militarism* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1998), 10-15. According to Ben-Eliezer, a “nation-in-arms” means that there is a blurring of distinction in what separates the military from the political and social spheres. Also, the state will then be able to channel most of its resources (both human and material) for military purposes.

<sup>81</sup> Yoram Peri, *Between Battles and Bullets: Israeli Military in Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 42.

process, and the IDF was the unifying instrument to achieve this end.<sup>82</sup> Ben-Gurion's "securitist" orientation led to (1) universal conscription, (2) the IDF's pervasiveness and encroachment into other realms of the Israeli system (such as education), and (3) the IDF being placed on a pedestal.<sup>83</sup>

Due to the centrality of defense in the Israeli system and the prestige accorded to the IDF, Israel's first generation of leaders often used the military as a policy instrument. As noted by Udi Lebel:

Defense policy in Israel has always been considered *the* most critical domain, providing Israelis with their most vital public product: security. The tool of security is the army, which has become endowed with a religious status . . . Security receives the lion's share of the State budget, and defense policy is the key component determining the way citizens vote.<sup>84</sup>

As a result, the IDF became more like "an army working as a partner in the political process, integrated with the civil power even beyond the national-security field."<sup>85</sup> Also, because the civil system lacked the kind of strategic planning capabilities that the IDF possessed, this further encouraged political leaders to rely heavily on the IDF's assessment and recommendations. The high regard accorded to the IDF by both Israeli political elites and society was then further elevated after the 1967 war. As noted by Stuart Cohen, "for some two decades after the mid-1960s, the relationship of the leading figures in Israel's political, economic and judicial establishments toward the IDF was basically one

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<sup>82</sup> Catignani, *Israeli Counter-Insurgency and The Intifadas*, 30.

<sup>83</sup> Micha Popper, "The Israeli Defense Forces as a Socialization Agent," in *Security Concerns: Insights from the Israeli Experience*, ed. Daniel Bar-Tal, Dan Jacobson, and Aharon Klieman (Stamford: JAI Press, 1998), 167–8; Michael Barnett, "High Politics is Low Politics: The Domestic and Systemic Sources of Israeli Security Policy, 1967–1977," *World Politics*, vol. 42, no. 4 (1990): 540.

<sup>84</sup> Udi Lebel, "Civil Society versus Military Sovereignty," *Armed Forces & Society*, vol. 34, no. 1 (2007): 71.

<sup>85</sup> Asher Arian, *Politics in Israel: The Second Republic* 2nd ed. (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2005), 330.

of symbiosis.”<sup>86</sup> Inevitably, the IDF found itself “dragged into [the] internal political disputes within Israel.” This was in part because many of the political parties tried to recruit senior military officers to be theirs.<sup>87</sup> This recruitment drive, in turn, contributed to the parachute syndrome, which, to a large degree, was founded on the purge system implemented by Ben-Gurion to keep the IDF force young, innovative, and politically neutral. Because of “parachuting,” by 2000, Israel had already had eight IDF senior leaders take the role of Defense Minister (DEFMIN), and, among them, three became Prime Minister (PM).<sup>88</sup> This helped to even further politicize the role of the military in security decision-making.<sup>89</sup>

In the Israeli civil-military system, the key players are the PM, DEFMIN, Chief of General Staff (CGS), Cabinet and *Knesset*. However, it is the relations among the PM, DEFMIN and CGS that prove to be the most problematic and have the most cascading effects in the decision-making realm. Due to the lack of a formal constitution that could clearly delineate the roles and responsibilities of these three players in the decision- and policy-making processes, the relationship among them is at best nebulous. The reason for this can, again, be traced to Ben-Gurion, who intentionally left the relationships ambiguous during his tenure. Although some efforts were made to try to rectify

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<sup>86</sup> Stuart A. Cohen, “Changing Civil-military Relations in Israel; Towards an Over-subordinate IDF?” *Israel Affairs*, vol. 12, no. 4 (2006): 773–4.

<sup>87</sup> Giora Goldberg, “The Growing Militarization of the Israeli Political System,” in *Communicating Security: Civil-military Relations in Israel*, ed. Udi Lebel (New York: Routledge, 2008), 24–5.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., 17–9. The eight who became DEFMIN are Dayan, Weizman, Rabin, Sharon, Mordechai, Ben-Eliezer, Mofaz, and Barak. The three who rose further to become PM are Rabin, Barak, and Sharon.

<sup>89</sup> Yoram Peri, *The Israeli Military and Israel’s Palestinian Policy: From Oslo to the Al-Aqsa Intifada* (Washington, DC: United States Institute for Peace, November 2002), 58. These officers-turned-politicians bring with them their attendant connection with the IDF when they enter politics. Hence, by extension, there is a natural tendency for them to lean on the military for political support if required. This is especially so with regard to decision and policy making in the security realm. Also, as noted, many of these leaders are former commanders of SOF units (for example, Sharon and Barak).

the problems after he left office, they were nothing more than half-hearted.<sup>90</sup> The situation was made worse when the PM-DEFMIN positions were split after the 1967 War.<sup>91</sup>

Due to the creation of a DEFMIN separate from the PM, it is now the DEFMIN and CGS who fight to be the voice for the IDF. This competition often results in the military exploiting the unclear relationship to its advantage. By doing so, the IDF further entrenches itself in the realm of strategic decision and policy making, thus blurring the civil-military relationship even further.<sup>92</sup>

As it is not my intention to trace the full development of the Israeli political-military system from its birth to the present, suffice it to say that what Ben-Gurion did in the early years, to a large extent, contributed to the current state of Israel's political-military relationship. The pervasiveness of the IDF in the early years, followed by the "parachuting" of generals into the political system, plus Ben-Gurion's failure to correct the system before he left office, inadvertently paved the way for the IDF to make inroads into the political sphere. Once this pattern was set in the Israeli system without being corrected, the IDF's ability to wield disproportionate influence over the decision and policy making became an accepted norm. In this way, "political deference to the military... [as] an enduring hallmark of the Israeli system" was crystallized.<sup>93</sup> As a result, despite potentially profound changes in the broader environment and a substantial decline in the

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<sup>90</sup> Catignani, *Israeli Counter-Insurgency and The Intifadas*, 40-1. The Agranat Commission in 1974 were followed by 1976's "Basic Law: Army."

<sup>91</sup> Uri Ben-Eliezer, "Rethinking the Civil-Military Relations Paradigm: The Inverse Relation Between Militarism and Praetorianism through the Example of Israel," *Comparative Political Studies*, vol. 30, no. 3 (1997): 367. The first instance of the split was during the 1967 War when Levi Eshkol was the Prime Minister who succeeded Ben-Gurion. He was forced to hand over his DEFMIN position to Moshe Dayan.

<sup>92</sup> Alan Weinraub, *The Evolution Of Israeli Civil-Military Relations: Domestic Enablers And The Quest For Security* (Monterey, CA: Naval Postgraduate School, December 2009), 63-4.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 73. This is also because the civilian system was not able to strengthen its strategic planning capabilities even though weaknesses in this area were previously identified.

status of the IDF after the 1973 war, the political elite have continuously failed to subjugate the military to their control.<sup>94</sup> Hence, the political-military relationship remains problematic.

Pertinent to this thesis, this fraught relationship makes maintaining oversight of the IDF a huge challenge for policy makers, and it also causes substantial tension between political and military elites.<sup>95</sup> The confluence of these dynamics then leads to the failure to construct a clear and consistent national security doctrine, which further allows the military to exploit and dominate the defense decision-making realm. As will be shown later, leaving the military to decide the security strategy without clear guidance from the political echelon has resulted in the IDF's failure to *adapt* to the prevailing strategic environment. And, this failure to adapt has certainly affected Israeli SOF.

### **c. The IDF**

We will now look at two key aspects of the IDF that have a significant impact on SOF—the IDF's culture and resources (budget). For IDF culture, “mission-command principles” coupled with the *Bituism* ethos, and a favorable environment for SOF both stand out. The former affects the senior military leaders’ ability to think strategically, and hence can be argued to be the reason why Israel does not have a consistent and clear security/military doctrine for SOF. For its part, the latter bodes well for SOF, as it means SOF is not

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<sup>94</sup> By the 1980s, the political, economic, social and strategic environments of Israel had changed considerably. First, the Israeli polity became even more fragmented due to the “opening up” of the political system. Second, cracks in the political consensus over Israel’s strategic threat environment became more pronounced. Although most still consider dangers from LICs, WMD and conventional threats as clear and present, more people within the society are starting to question the government’s approach in dealing with them. Also, the “privatization” of Israel’s economy has had an unintended consequence on the “collectivism” of the society. Then, too, in the 1990s, Netanyahu attempted to keep the IDF away from the political sphere, but failed.

<sup>95</sup> Metin Heper and Joshua Itzkowitz-Shifrinson, “Civil-military Relations in Israel and Turkey,” *Journal of Political and Military Sociology*, vol. 33, no. 2 (2005): 236; Catignani, *Israeli Counter-Insurgency and The Intifadas*, 38. According to Itzkowitz-Shifrinson, there was often a divergence in views between the military and the Likud governments during the period 1977–1992.

discriminated against by the conventional forces. This is in contrast to the situation in some countries, for example the United States, where there is often a schism between SOF and the conventional forces.<sup>96</sup>

In terms of resources, the tightening of the defense budget, coupled with the IDF's preoccupation with state-of-the-art weapon systems and platforms pose challenges. Together, they affect SOF's ability to maintain a technical edge, not only in terms of "hardware" (equipment) but also "software" (skill sets). Ultimately, as we will see, the favorable environment for SOF has not translated into guaranteed support in terms of the resources and attention SOF demand.

(1) Mission-Command Principles and *Bituism*. One of Ben-Gurion's main concerns was Israel's quantitative inferiority in terms of material resources and territorial depth when compared to its Arab neighbors. To overcome these shortfalls, he believed Israel's advantage would have to be found in its people. Consequently, Israel placed a high premium on the qualitative edge of the IDF soldier, with an emphasis on strong leadership, competence, and hard training to produce the kind of "force multipliers" the country has needed when confronting its bigger enemies. In addition to having a young and aggressive officer corps with strong leadership skills, IDF soldiers were also technologically literate. With its mission-command ethos, the IDF concentrated on the operational and tactical flexibility needed to achieve battlefield victory over its Arab neighbors in the shortest possible time.

The two key characteristics of the mission-command ethos are: (1) a command and control structure that decentralizes decision making to the lower ranks of command, and (2) dedication to objectives rather than rigid plans. Combining the mission-command ethos with *bituism* (a Hebrew word

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<sup>96</sup> Grant M. Martin, *Special Operations and Conventional Forces: How to Improve Unity of Effort Using Afghanistan as a Case Study* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 2009), 29-31. Here, Martin talks about the mistrust and misunderstanding between the U.S. SOF and conventional forces, even after the Goldwater-Nichols Act.

that means “to do”) yields an IDF organizational culture where “tactical autonomy” and improvisation are highly valued, officers are objectives-oriented, aggressive, and have strong initiative.<sup>97</sup> However, as important and necessary as this culture is for maintaining the IDF’s tactical and operational edge, there has been a downside thanks to its entrenchment through all levels of officership.

Because of the constant-conflict environment in which Israel finds itself, the IDF culture ends up encouraging in IDF commanders a focus that is often short-term and tactically/operationally-biased. This undermines the imperative for leaders to think long-term and strategically vis-à-vis force preparation and planning. Also, it retards leaders’ intellectual capacity “to learn, plan and reflect,” so much so that it often obscures leaders’ ability to appreciate their actions within the larger context of the war or conflict. This culture even results in the IDF preferring “a pragmatic *bituist* (‘doer’) over a reflective thinker.”<sup>98</sup> Consequently, IDF commanders too often allow themselves to be caught up with “pressing day-to-day problems” rather than being “troubled by the war to come,” and they “want to be everywhere, to decide everything, to invest the maximum in whatever engages them.”<sup>99</sup> Significantly, this culture permeates all levels of the officer corps, from the Brigade to the Division, and even up through the General Staff Commanders.<sup>100</sup> To some degree, it is because of this culture that Israel has continued to fail to redress its ambiguous political-military relations, as well as its national security/military doctrine.

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<sup>97</sup> Catignani, *Israeli Counter-Insurgency and The Intifadas*, 53-8; Jim Storr, “A Command Philosophy for the Information Age: The Continuing Relevance of Mission Command,” *Defence Studies*, vol. 3, no. 3 (2003): 119. According to Catignani, “In the field, in battle, matters would be decided by the combatants [and] it would be the commanders in the field who would tell [the IDF Chief of Staff] what could and what could not be done.” Further, Storr says that, “[mission-command is] a decentralized style of command relying on initiative, the acceptance of responsibility and mutual trust ... [with] the fundamental responsibility to act, or in certain circumstances ... not to act, within the framework of the commander’s intent.”

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., 59, 164.

<sup>99</sup> Yaakov Hasdai, “Doers’ and ‘Thinkers’ in the IDF,” *The Jerusalem Quarterly*, no. 24 (Summer 1982): 16-8.

<sup>100</sup> Catignani, *Israeli Counter-Insurgency and The Intifadas*, 165.

(2) Favorable SOF-Conventional Environment. The IDF has an elitist culture that places the Israeli SOF in a favorable environment. This is in part thanks to Israel's long history of relying on its SOF or elite forces. From the Special Night Squad under Captain Orde Charles Wingate, to the Pal'mach, and then to the more recent Unit 101 and the many Sayeret units, these are all special units that accept only the *crème de la crème*; the individuals of these units epitomize the elite warrior qualities of the IDF.<sup>101</sup> To this end, SOF and elite units are the most popular with young draftees inducted into IDF.<sup>102</sup>

Another indicator that underlines the IDF's positive attitude toward its SOF is the career path of officers from these SOF units. Many commanders of these units rise to become senior leaders not only in their own services, but also at the General Staff and national level. There was even a time when the IDF General Staff was "populated by special operations officers who, many say, represent the *new* IDF."<sup>103</sup>

(3) Resources. Unfortunately for Israeli SOF, the IDF's pro-SOF environment does not translate directly into guaranteed support in key areas such as budgetary resources. This is exemplified in the IDF's knack of allocating disproportionate budgetary resources toward high tech systems and platforms, rather than the lower cost equipment for SOF/ground forces. The former is driven largely by the IDF's offensive and technologically-biased military doctrine. This propensity to invest in state-of-the-art technology and platforms (predominantly for the Air Force) can be seen in the IDF's most recent budget allocations and plans. From 2008 to 2010, between 65–68% of the defense

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<sup>101</sup> Samuel M. Katz, *Israeli Special Forces* (Wisconsin: Motorbooks International Publishers & Wholesalers, 1993), 8–22.

<sup>102</sup> Catignani, *Israeli Counter-Insurgency and The Intifadas*, 140. According to Catignani, a survey conducted at the Tel Hashomer Induction Centre shows that 91.3 percent of the recruits inducted in November 2004 requested to serve in these combat units.

<sup>103</sup> Katz, *Israeli Special Forces*, 63. For example, "two of the past four IDF Navy commanders have been former Flotilla 13 commanders," with Maj Gen. Ze'ev Almog being the first of the two. Over on the Army side, several commanders of the Sayeret units rose to the positions of regional commander, General Staff, and even Minister. The notable ones are Ehud Barak, Ariel Sharon, and Yitzhak Mordechai.

budget allotted to procurement and R&D was spent on the Air Force. Further, even though there are plans to modernize the army as articulated in the Teffen 2012 workplan, most of the modernization involves artillery and tank pieces, which are not totally relevant in the LIC domain.<sup>104</sup> These figures serve to reinforce the assertion that the IDF's top echelon is still very much tethered to its high-intensity and conventional warfare mindset, and has *failed to adapt* to the prevailing security environment.<sup>105</sup>

To make matters worse for the SOF community, the defense budget as a whole is suffering from cutbacks by the government. Since the 1990s, there has been a steady decline in the defense budget, dropping from about 12% of the total budget in 1990 to a steady level of about 7% in the 2000s.<sup>106</sup> More recently, in 2009 and 2010, the Knesset instituted further cuts in the army budget. These cost-cutting measures are not meant just to address the recent downturn, but are here to stay. According to Jane's defense report, the Knesset aims to trim more than US\$3 billion from the defense budget over the next 10 years (2011 to 2019).<sup>107</sup> Some may argue that SOF's budget often makes up a small percentage of the overall defense budget, and, therefore, these factors should not have a significant impact on SOF. In the Israeli case, however, the proliferation of ad-hoc special/elite units to counter the LIC threat has complicated the situation and given rise to severe competition over the

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<sup>104</sup> "Jane's Defence Budget: Israel Defence Budget," *IHS Jane's: Defence & Security Intelligence Analysis*, <http://jdb.janes.com/jdb-web/countryBudget.do?> (accessed February 15, 2011).

<sup>105</sup> Arikan, *Transformation of the Israeli Defense Forces*, 83. According to Arikan, "the IDF's current doctrine was developed after the traumatic experience of the 1973 Yom Kippur War, and the current senior IDF leaders, who were young officers then, are under the influence of these early experiences."

<sup>106</sup> Hanan Sher, "Facets of the Israeli Economy - The Defense Industry," *Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, [http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/MFAArchive/2000\\_2009/](http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/MFAArchive/2000_2009/) (accessed February 15, 2011); Heller, *Continuity and Change in Israeli Security Policy*, 47. These budget cuts are done in the face of a decreased threat from Israel's "second circle." The IDF also has to spend more on manpower costs in an effort to retain and recruit officers and NCOs. This is due to increased competition from the private sector.

<sup>107</sup> "Jane's Defence Budget: Israel Defence Budget," *IHS Jane's*.

already small SOF budget.<sup>108</sup> In the end, this small budget may not be sufficient for all the SOF/elite units engaged in countering the LIC threat, and may result in a repeat of what transpired during the *Second Intifada*. During the *Second Intifada*, SOF's training and equipping were significantly impacted by a similarly tight economy and the IDF's proclivity for high-tech standoff systems at the time.<sup>109</sup>

#### ***d. Population***

Notwithstanding talk about the IDF becoming a more professional force, no such plans have come to fruition.<sup>110</sup> The IDF (SOF included) remain heavily dependent on Israeli society for its draftees and reservists who make up the bulk of the force. It is thus important to examine how societal changes in the 21<sup>st</sup> century might affect Israeli SOF. One particular issue is recruitment and retention, with an area of concern being youths' greater focus on individualism versus more traditional "collectivism." This is further reinforced by a changing Israeli national identity and the success of a "privatized" economy.

In Israel's formative years, the whole society had always stood behind the government's concept of "milkhemet ein breira" (wars of no choice),

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108 Martin Van Creveld, *The Sword and The Olive: A Critical History of the Israeli Defense Forces* (New York: Public Affairs, 1998), 344; Ami Pedahzur, *The Israeli Secret Services And The Struggle Against Terrorism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 137. During the first Intifada, two new units, Duvdevan and Shimshon, were established to infiltrate the local Arab population to prosecute or arrest suspects. In addition, according to Pedahzur, many top echelon leaders often took their own initiative to "create" their own "special units" to address such threats in their respective area of operations. Enabling this was the widespread and high volume of low intensity threats that Israel faces. Consequently, this has led to many disparate units in the IDF that are capable of conducting small-unit, behind-the-line type of special operations.

109 Catignani, *Israeli Counter-Insurgency and The Intifadas*, 142-6. According to Catignani, with budget cuts in the period of the second intifada, the IDF's ground forces training exercises were drastically reduced, so much so that this significantly affected the readiness of the soldiers. Pertinent to SOF, "the course of training for elite units ha[d] been halved to one year." The "hardware" part of the equation was also severely affected. For example, during Operation "Days of Penitence" in October 2004, a team of elite soldiers was sent into an urban area in Gaza for a two-week mission without proper "flak jackets." This led some soldiers to comment that "other than the air force, this is an army that is held together by masking tape and rope and there is always a lack of equipment."

110 Arikhan, *Transformation of the Israeli Defense Forces*, 95-6. The plans refer to the IDF moving away from tradition of being a "people's army."

as the threats from the second circle were indeed real and present.<sup>111</sup> This facilitated the creation of a “people’s army” under the Defense Service Law in 1949 that established “the three-tier military service system of conscription, permanent and reserve military service.”<sup>112</sup> Further, this securitist orientation also gave rise to the “social evaluative system of Israel,” which incentivized the whole notion of contributing to the state’s security.<sup>113</sup> As a result, “service in the IDF had gone beyond legal obligations, and it had in effect became Israel’s civil religion.”<sup>114</sup> However, this collectivism and patriotism started to come apart in the 1982 Lebanon War, as the war represented a fundamental shift in Israel’s principles of *milkhemet ein breira*. Since then, there has been a growing division in Israeli society’s perception of its strategic environment and security policies. Many no longer see Israel as the victim of wars of no choice. This deepening of social fault lines is reflective of changing demographics, among other causes.<sup>115</sup>

Another development on the economic front has also affected social cohesion. Following the privatization in the 1980s, Israel’s economy did well and contributed to material prosperity.<sup>116</sup> Society became more self-centered, leading to a greater focus on the individual and less willingness to

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<sup>111</sup> Reuven Gal, *A Portrait of the Israeli Soldier* (London: Greenwood, 1986), 147. According to Gal, this concept was formed as a result of two collective memories: “on the one hand, the living memory of the Holocaust and on the other, the recognition that the state of Israel, the only sovereign home of the Jews, was surrounded by Arab states waiting to take advantage of any Israeli weakness.”

<sup>112</sup> Catignani, *Israeli Counter-Insurgency and The Intifadas*, 31.

<sup>113</sup> Dan Horowitz and Baruch Kimmerling, “Some Social Implications of Military Service and the Reserves System in Israel,” *European Journal of Sociology*, vol. 15, no. 1 (1974): 265. Because of the pervasiveness of security in Israeli society, participation in security tasks, especially in combat roles, is seen as a reward. In a way, the extent to which one contributes to the defense of Israel helps determine one’s socio-economic and political status.

<sup>114</sup> Arikan, *Transformation of the Israeli Defense Forces*, 59.

<sup>115</sup> Gershon Shafir and Yoav Peled, *Being Israeli: The Dynamics of Multiple Citizenship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 16-32. According to Shafir and Peled, modern Israeli society has three main discourses – Republican, Liberal, and Ethno-nationalist. The Republican is associated with the early Ashkenazi elites and is about the shared ideals of Zionism. The Liberal is mainly a result of post-modern culture and is supported by economically strong Ashkenazi and sympathizers, such as immigrants from the Former Soviet Union, Arab citizens, and guest workers. Ethno-nationalists are usually Mizrahi Jews and the *haredim*. Some *haredim* only cooperate with the State for practical purposes.

<sup>116</sup> Weinraub, *The Evolution Of Israeli Civil-Military Relations*, 47.

sacrifice for the sake of the collective good. More importantly, this has affected younger Israelis' attitudes toward their service in the IDF and SOF. As Mark A. Heller writes:

such conscripts, influenced by a broader social ethos of personal self-fulfillment, were increasingly likely to view military service as an opportunity to acquire professional skills and knowledge, or to develop social networks that would be useful in later life, rather than simply as a way to contribute to the security of the country.<sup>117</sup>

Further, the statistics Heller compiled point to a distinct decline in the draftees' willingness to enlist for a full three-year stint of service, including for service with combat units.<sup>118</sup> Ultimately, this may mean SOF will face greater challenges in recruiting and retaining the right kind of people going into the future.

## 2. Israeli Security and Military Doctrine

According to Ariel Levite,

At the strategic and operational levels, military doctrine establishes the principles that guide the design of military force structure and operations...[and is] the connecting link between defense policy and national strategy on the one hand, and the operational plans of the armed forces on the other.<sup>119</sup>

From this, it can be inferred that for the military to be an effective national defense instrument, military doctrine has to be aligned with national security/defense strategy. But, in the case of Israel, there is no such unequivocal national security doctrine and, surprisingly, there has never been one.<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> Heller, *Continuity and Change in Israeli Security Policy*, 47, 59.

<sup>118</sup> Pertinent to SOF, in the best secular schools known for producing Israel's social, economic and political leaders, willingness to serve in combat units declined by 24% between 1993 to 1998.

<sup>119</sup> Ariel Levite, *Offence and Defence in Israeli Military Doctrine* (San Francisco: Westview Press, 1989), 9–10.

<sup>120</sup> Rodman, *Defense and Diplomacy in Israel's National Security Experience*, 2; Moshe Lissak, "Civilian Components in the National security doctrine," in *National Security and Democracy in Israel*, ed. Avner Yaniv (London: Lynne Rienner, 1993), 64; Heller, *Continuity and Change in Israeli Security Policy*, 9. According to these authors, Israel has never had such a Defense White Paper or the kind of guidance or doctrine normally issued by national authorities.

Instead, what Israel uses to guide the formulation of its military doctrine are security concepts based on the leadership's interpretation of the strategic environment and some central assumptions inherited from the state's earlier years.<sup>121</sup> Because of this, and because of the dynamics in the political-military relationship at the leadership level (described previously), the IDF is left very much in control of decision making in the security realm. As we shall see, given such latitude, the military tends to exploit this for its own organizational benefit.<sup>122</sup>

Despite significant changes in the strategic environment, changes to military doctrine have been more evolutionary than revolutionary. This can be explained largely thanks to the strong organizational culture and memory of the IDF, with leaders tethered to their offensive and somewhat conventional mindset.<sup>123</sup> Moreover, there have been no real incentives for them to break away from this mindset as, given society's growing sensitivity to the use of the "civilian army," the associated issue of casualties in the IDF has also loomed large. Taking these two factors together, leaders only stand to benefit by

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<sup>121</sup> Heller, *Continuity and Change in Israeli Security Policy*, 9-10.

<sup>122</sup> Ze'ev Drory, *Israel's Reprisal Policy 1953-1956: The Dynamics of Military Retaliation* (London: Frank Cass, 2005), 4; Dan Horowitz, "Israel's War in Lebanon: New Patterns of Strategic Thinking and Civil-Military Relations," in *Israeli Society and Its Defense Establishment: The Social and Political Impact of a Protracted Violent Conflict*, ed. Moshe Lissak (London: Frank Cass and Company, 1984), 99. For Horowitz, there are "doubts regarding the efficacy of the control mechanisms which enable the political level to supervise the actions of the civilian and military echelons of the defense establishment." Further, Drory maintains that if not reined in, the military will pursue its own interests as "it has its own aspirations and needs ... to the military, creating and maintaining a record of operational success stands above any other considerations."

<sup>123</sup> Avi Kober, "Israeli War Objectives Into an Era of Negativism," in *Israel's National Security Towards The 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, ed. Uri Bar-Joseph (London: Frank Cass, 2001), 186-7. Israel's earlier "offensive-defense" security concept was predicated on: first, Israel lacks strategic depth and hence is not able to absorb enemy attack; second, offense is a "force multiplier" because it "compensates for their [Israel's] quantitative inferiority by initiating war and choosing the place and time of the confrontation;" third, offense is regarded as the only way in which battlefield victory can be achieved. Consequently, Israel's military doctrine places a premium on early warning and offensive pre-emption to help the IDF take the battle to enemy territory, and also emphasizes a short war with minimum casualties. One can argue that these concepts remain dominant in today's IDF's doctrine. This, to a large degree, is due to the deeply ingrained organizational culture, including the *bituist* ethos. Also, the fact that many political-military leaders are veterans of previous wars means this offensive doctrine can provide other things like prestige and status.

continuing to emphasize the use of advanced standoff weapons systems and platforms in contrast to putting boots on the ground.

Some authors describe this new concept as bringing fire, rather than the battle, to the enemy territory.<sup>124</sup> We see evidence of this shift in the last three conflicts — namely the two intifadas and the Second Lebanon War. Excessive firepower was employed even in LIC environments.<sup>125</sup> Thus, worth examining is what this means for SOF. To be sure, there has been at least one critical impact: namely, the neglect of Israeli SOF. This, in turn, has had at least two deleterious effects on optimizing SOF's overall organization for the changed strategic environment. One, there has been a failure to clearly address the division of labor among SOF/elite units. Two, budgetary resources for SOF have been scarce due to the IDF's preoccupation with advanced standoff systems and platforms. As a consequence of these *Structural* issues, problems have arisen in the *Tasks, Culture, and Human Capital* aspects of Israel's SOF organization.

### **3. Israeli Service-Centric SO Organization**

Having understood the kind of environment in which the Israeli SOF organization operates, we will now examine the SOF organization to see how well it is set up to negotiate this environment. In Israel's case, the macro-SOF organization is still a Service-centric structure, which means both administrative and operational C2 are tied to each individual service. Rather than focus on each individual service level, this section of the chapter takes an aggregated look at all the SOF units from the IDF's perspective. Although there have been reports and talk about Israel setting up an oversight agency to coordinate all SO,

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<sup>124</sup> Catignani, *Israeli Counter-Insurgency and The Intifadas*, 71; Avi Kober, "Israeli War Objectives Into an Era of Negativism," 190-1; "Israel Defence Budget," *IHS Jane's*. According to Jane's Defence Report, the Teffen 2012 workplan continues to focus on advanced standoff weapon systems and platforms. Although some of these systems are meant to address unconventional threats at the higher end, there is still a significant neglect of LIC. Further, there is also no mention that SOF is considered part of this strategic standoff/strike system under the resource allocation process. The resource allocation process also seems to still be service-based rather than system- or solution-based.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid., 108–9, 188–9.

there is no evidence to confirm the existence of such a body at the time of this writing.<sup>126</sup> Hence, if this section turns out to be dated, it should still serve to highlight the advantages and disadvantages of a Service-centric macro-SOF organization.

In sum, the Israeli SOF comprise four key units—Sayeret Matkal (AMAN, Military Intelligence),<sup>127</sup> Maglan (Army), Shaldag (Air Force), and Shayetet 13 (Navy).

#### **a. Structure**

The biggest challenge in studying Israeli SOF is to try to separate those units that are truly special from those that are merely elite. Due to the strong elitist culture in the IDF, coupled with the fact that there is no clear doctrine to delineate these forces, we can easily find units proclaiming themselves to be special or “expert” in certain SO-type missions. To be sure, this is not a recent phenomenon; however, when LIC burst onto Israel’s security scene in the late 70s, this problem was amplified. Since the 70s, more units have been added to the fold, including those from other branches of the Israeli government, such as Intelligence and Police.<sup>128</sup>

For the purposes of this thesis, I have chosen to start with the categorization given by Ami Pedahzur in his book, *The Israeli Secret Services and The Struggle Against Terrorism*, as shown in Figure 3.

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<sup>126</sup> Alon Ben-David, “Israel Reflects - New Model Army?” *Jane’s Defence Weekly*, October 11, 2006, <http://search.janes.com.libproxy.nps.edu/Search/> (accessed March 15, 2011).

<sup>127</sup> Pedahzur, *The Israeli Secret Services*, 20. Aman is the military intelligence branch of the IDF, and among its functions is to “compile intelligence on the armies of Arab countries and maintain internal military security.”

<sup>128</sup> “Israel’s Amphibious and Special Forces,” *IHS Jane’s: Defence & Security Intelligence Analysis*, [http://jasf.janes.com/docs/jasf/browse\\_country\\_results](http://jasf.janes.com/docs/jasf/browse_country_results) (accessed March 14, 2011); Katz, *Israeli Special Forces*; “Israeli Defense Forces Website,” <http://dover.idf.il/IDF/English/units/forces/ground/infantry> (accessed March 14, 2011); Pedahzur, *The Israeli Secret Services*, 64–5. According to Pedahzur, the rise of LIC in the late 70s to 80s caused many infantry units to shift their focus to this area. This is because of the prestige and attention given to such operations. As a consequence, there are reportedly more than 10 “special forces” units in the IDF. Unfortunately for Israel, the intensity and volume of the LIC threats have encouraged such proliferation.

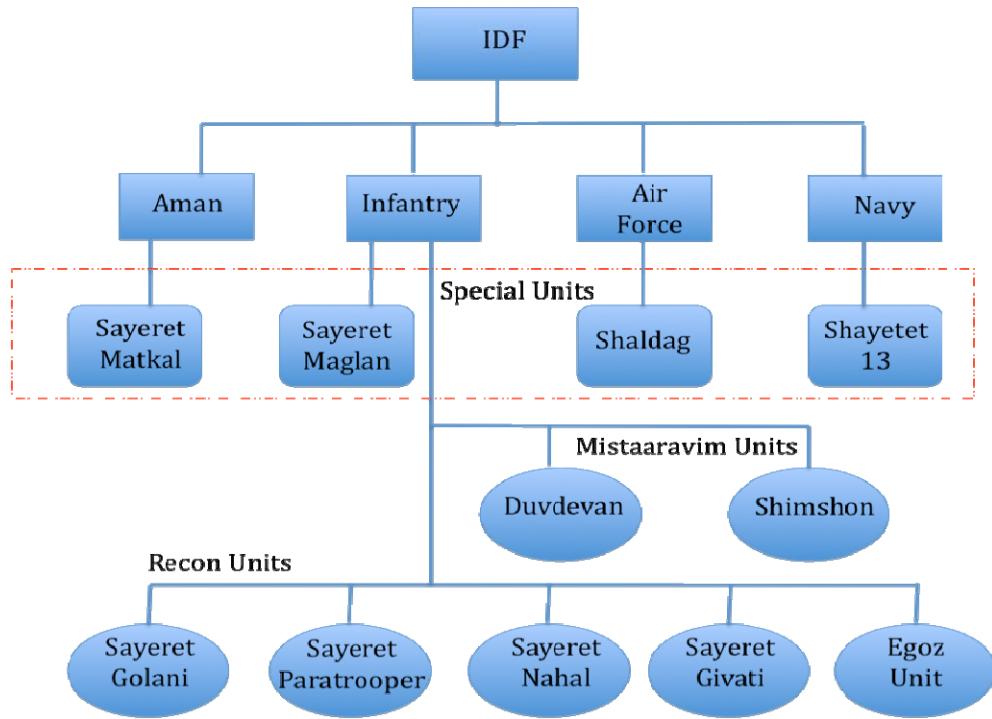


Figure 3. IDF SOF and Elite Units<sup>129</sup> [From Pedahzur, p. 5]

From the figure, it is clear that the SOF units in Israel are Sayeret Matkal, Maglan, Shaldag, and Shayetet 13 (S'13). These units have a direct connection to the top leaders in their respective services, especially during strategic operations. Furthermore, in some operations, the line of communications even reaches to the top of the IDF.<sup>130</sup> By way of comparison, elite Army Sayeret units fall under the regional command and are further subordinated to their respective Corps or Division. Beyond the ability to communicate directly with those at the top, which is critical for a strategic asset like SOF, Israeli SOF are also well supported by their adjacent services during operations (e.g., by Intelligence and air support). This is thanks to the inherently

<sup>129</sup> Sayeret stands for reconnaissance, and *Mistaaravim* means “to disguise oneself” and “to become Arab”, for the purpose of intelligence collection and clandestine operations.

<sup>130</sup> Ze'ev Almog, *Flotilla 13: Israeli Naval Commandos in the Red Sea, 1967-1973* (Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 2010), 48–51.

joint culture of the IDF.<sup>131</sup> SOF's ability to operate jointly with other services (either *other services'* SOF or conventional forces) can be seen in many operations throughout the IDF's combat history and is exemplified by the two examples below:

(1) Operation Bulmus 6 (July 19, 1969). This was an operation conducted during the War of Attrition on Green Island located in the Gulf of Suez. This operation involved the S'13 and Sayeret Matkal as the main combatants, while the conventional forces (helicopter, fighter aircraft, and artillery) served as the support forces. The aim of the mission was to "liquidate the enemy force on Green Island and incapacitate structures and guns" on the island.<sup>132</sup> In the end, SOF accomplished the mission successfully, which provided Israel with the strategic signaling it needed vis-à-vis Egypt. More importantly, this operation showcased SOF's ability to operate jointly at the component level, and also with the conventional forces.<sup>133</sup>

(2) Operation Spring of Youth (April 9, 1973). This was a leadership-targeting mission conducted during Operation Wrath of God aimed at punishing the PLO in the aftermath of the Munich Massacre. This mission involved four key parties—S'13, Sayeret Matkal, the Paratroopers Reconnaissance unit, and Mossad agents. Essentially, the S'13 was to deliver the Sayeret Matkal and the paratroopers to the Beirut shore where they would then meet up with the Mossad agents who would guide them to their objective. The aim of the mission was to assassinate three senior Fatah members living in

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<sup>131</sup> This joint culture has been built into the IDF since its formative years. Due to the asymmetry of forces between Israel and the Arab states in conventional warfare, Israel has come to accept that it needs to gain superiority in other areas in order to upend the Arab forces. One key to achieving this is to wage joint warfare, the Israeli version of "blitzkrieg," so that it can offset its inferiority in numbers. This was demonstrated in the 1967 war and the latter part of the 1973 war.

<sup>132</sup> Almog, *Flotilla 13*, 25.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid. For more details on the operation, see pp. 31–99.

Beirut. Although two paratroopers were killed during the mission, the team achieved its main objectives.<sup>134</sup> This mission, again, demonstrated SOF's interoperability, to include with the Intelligence agency.

These successes only tell half the story, however. In contrast to the positive relationships we see in these examples, SOF units do not seem to enjoy the same degree of interoperability with elite units from their same service (this is especially the case for army units) or with other special units expressing expertise in the same area. One possible explanation for this is that there is "territorial competition" between SOF and these other units, which is underpinned by the fight over scarce resources. Arguably, this is not a problem within the SOF community because there seems to be a tacit understanding regarding each unit's domain of interest, plus the fact that they are separated by the service lines (recall that SOF units fall fully under the services).<sup>135</sup>

### ***b. Tasks***

In general, the tasks of Israeli SOF and elite units revolve around two key domains: (1) short duration, commando-type operations (including counterterrorism), and (2) intelligence collection or reconnaissance-type operations. At this point, it is important to distinguish between the Matkal and the other elite Army Sayeret units. Although all of them are prefixed with the term Sayeret, which means *Reconnaissance*, Matkal is the de facto "General Staff Recon Unit" and is a part of Aman.<sup>136</sup> The other Sayerets are the elite recon units of the Army Division or Corps. The more specific definition of Matkal's tasks, as well as those of the rest of the SOF units, are as follows.

(1) Sayeret Matkal (or Unit 269): Historically, this unit's mission was to operate and maintain listening devices behind enemy lines for

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<sup>134</sup> Moshe Zonder, *The Elite Unit of Israel* (Jerusalem: Keter, 2000), 59-60; Mike Eldar, *Flotilla 13* (Tel Aviv: Maariv, 1993), 469-80.

<sup>135</sup> Although my intention is to focus on the four SF units, references have to be made to other elite units to bring home the point about the lack of a clear doctrine for SO.

<sup>136</sup> Katz, *Israeli Special Forces*, 9-10, 20.

military intelligence, Aman. It was modeled after the British Special Air Service (SAS) and was conversant with small unit operations. However, with the onset of LIC, it has become more of a counterterrorism than an intelligence unit.<sup>137</sup>

(2) Shayetet 13 (or Ha'Kommando Ha'Yami as it is known in Israel): is comprised of Israel's naval commandos and is modeled along the lines of the British Special Boat Service (SBS). This unit is expert not only in short duration and small-scale naval assault and underwater operations, but also para-infantry maneuvers in coastal areas. Additionally, Israel's naval commandos operate their own small craft, like kayaks and mini-submarines (called "pigs").<sup>138</sup> In more recent times, CT (especially maritime CT) has become another of this unit's missions due to the high incidence of terrorism.

(3) Yechidat Shaldag (or Unit 5101): This is a special operations aviation unit that resembles the U.S. 160<sup>th</sup> Special Operations Aviation Regiment. Apart from its main mission of marking targets behind enemy lines for air strikes, it is also capable of long-range patrolling in enemy-held territory.<sup>139</sup>

(4) Sayeret Maglan (or Unit 212): This unit is the youngest of the four; it is a special task force attached to the three regional commands, but reports directly to the General Staff. It specializes in long-range missile warfare using Anti Tank Guided Missiles (ATGM), and it is also capable of operating jointly with the Israeli Air Force (IAF) to mark targets using laser-targeting. However, when LIC became an "existential threat" to Israel, this unit shifted its focus to CT as well, and fielded "terrorist hunters" in the LIC environment.<sup>140</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> Zonder, *The Elite Unit of Israel*, 22–31; "Israel's Amphibious and Special Forces," *IHS Jane's*.

<sup>138</sup> Katz, *Israeli Special Forces*, 48–55; "Israel's Amphibious and Special Forces," *IHS Jane's*; Almog, *Flotilla 13*, 11–2.

<sup>139</sup> Samuel M. Katz, *The Illustrated Guide to the World's Top Counter-Terrorist Forces* (Hong Kong: Concord Publications, 1995), 215; "Israel's Amphibious and Special Forces," *IHS Jane's*.

<sup>140</sup> "Israel's Amphibious and Special Forces," *IHS Jane's*.

Given that these SOF units fall under their respective services' C2, their areas of responsibilities are tied to their "natural" operational domains. Again, although there is some overlap in the area of CT especially, there has been no reported antagonism or competition between them. Rather, in-fighting occurs more often at the intra-service level or between different security establishments—for example, between Sayeret units in the Army, or, between Sayeret Matkal and Yamam (Police), or between Aman and GSS (Israeli National Intelligence Agency). The ambiguous delineation of job responsibilities in the realm of LIC is the root cause of this unhealthy culture. Still, to fully account for this in-fighting, we need to take into consideration at least two other factors.

First, most of these elite infantry units are built for war. With the likelihood of a conventional war much diminished, commanders needed to find a new niche area for their units. Hence, when LIC became the dominant concern among policy makers, it became a magnet for these commanders.<sup>141</sup> At first glance, this might seem like just another manifestation of the *bituist* (improvisational) culture of the IDF; however, on closer inspection, there may be a career-enhancing aspect to commanders' interest in LIC and CT. Closely related to this, is the continual need to "fight" to secure resources. As mentioned previously, most of the IDF's budget goes to the IAF. Consequently, everyone else operates in a resource-constrained environment and, hence, needs to not only project the image of being indispensable, but must also prove to be good in their role to ensure their survival.

Cumulatively, these factors would push any ambitious commander to put LIC at the top of his agenda, and, by so doing, would also lead those who are especially ambitious to either "form new units or wings within units

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<sup>141</sup> When the terrorist threats against Israel peaked in the early 2000s (in tandem with the second Intifada), they caught the eye of both the political-military leadership and the public. In order to show the public the government was combating the problem, the leadership was willing to give all the means necessary to whichever units were successful in such missions.

that already exist, [or] divert forces to counterterrorism missions..."<sup>142</sup> This, in turn, would be sufficient to create unhealthy and unnecessary competition between units, generating antagonism and sub-optimal cooperation at best, and sabotage at worst. Other problems include units not being able to adequately perform their newly acquired tasks due to insufficient/improper training, or, units' core skills becoming so degraded that the unit becomes the master of none.

Below are some examples that illustrate these problems:

- Antagonism and Sabotage. The deep seated rivalry between Matkal and Yamam in the domain of domestic CT dates back to the 1980s, not long after Yamam was formed as the designated agency to prosecute domestic CT.<sup>143</sup> However, due to political favoritism shown to Sayeret Matkal, Yamam often became the back-up force instead of the force of choice as mandated.

The first manifestation of this rivalry occurred during the Misgav Am incident in April 1980. A cell from the Arab Liberation Front seized hostages at a children's nursery in Kibbutz Misgav Am. Both the Sayeret Matkal and Yamam teams were called to the site. However, the Chief of Staff, who was the on-site commander for the operation, decided to entrust Sayeret Matkal with the mission. He did so despite Yamam's having been designated the unit to handle this type of mission. In the end, although the Matkal teams managed to kill all the terrorists, they suffered six wounded, one infant killed, and one nursery staff member wounded. The entire episode angered the Yamam fighters and, in protest, they collected their police passes in a bag and threw them in the face of the on-site commanders.<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>142</sup> Pedahzur, *The Israeli Secret Services*, 113, 137.

<sup>143</sup> Yamam was born in the aftermath of two infamous hostage rescue missions conducted by Sayeret Matkal – Ma'alot in May 1974, and the Savoy Hotel in May 1975. After the failure of these two operations, the Israeli government decided to act on the recommendations made by the inquiry commission for the Ma'alot incident, which was to set up Yamam. Yamam, to this day, is still the antiterrorist response unit for domestic hostage rescue missions. For more information, see: Zonder, *The Elite Unit of Israel*, 108–116.

<sup>144</sup> Zonder, *The Elite Unit of Israel*, 188–9; Pedahzur, *The Israeli Secret Services*, 62–4.

The antagonism and competition between the two units did not abate. In an April 1984 incident, called the “Bus 300 Affair,” and in July 2003 when a taxi driver (Eliyahu Gurel) was kidnapped, the IDF commanders in charge once again sidelined the Yamam teams. This incensed the Yamam fighters to such an extent that several resigned.<sup>145</sup>

Intense competition between units occasionally even gave rise to sabotage. In April 2002, Sayeret Matkal and a Duvdevan unit were activated to conduct a high profile kidnap rescue operation against the Tanzim forces in the West Bank. The Duvdevan soldiers, in their overzealous bid to be the “chosen unit” for this mission, sabotaged the Matkal team by hiding the truck it was to use to move to the mission area.<sup>146</sup>

- Ineffectiveness Due To Inadequate Training/Preparation. In August 2006, during the Second Lebanon War, Operation Sharp and Smooth was launched with teams composed of the Shaldag commandos and the Sayeret Matkal. This kidnap operation took place in the city of Baalbek. The target was the Hezbollah leader, Hasan Nasrallah. For some reason, the Shaldag commandos were chosen for the main task (the abduction) even though they were the less experienced of the two forces involved. In the end, the Shaldag commandos managed to take five men hostage based purely on their names, but all five had to be released because of mistaken identities. Although it is not clear why the Shaldag commandos did not go beyond a cursory name check before

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<sup>145</sup> Pedahzur, *The Israeli Secret Services*, 75--, 116–7.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid., 80; Amos Harel and Avi Issacharoff, *The Seventh War* (Tel Aviv: Miskal, 2004), 246. Duvdevan is a Mistaaravim (which means “to disguise oneself” and “to become Arab”, for the purposes of intelligence collection and clandestine operations) unit, and it was assigned to operate in the West Bank.

they abducted the men, nor is it certain the Matkal could have done a more professional job, what is clear is that the Shaldag commandos did not perform adequately for the assigned task.<sup>147</sup>

In a second operation, the IDF deployed a team of S'13 divers to the Lebanese City of Tyre in yet another attempt to kidnap high-ranking Hezbollah leaders. Although the tasks involved in this mission were clearly antithetical to S'13's operating principles, its divers were assigned. This mission took place in the heart of a city and required operators to dominate a five-story building before the actual kidnap could proceed. In the end, the S'13 not only failed to achieve the mission (the Hezbollah leaders managed to escape), but also suffered eight wounded.<sup>148</sup>

- Dilution of Core Expertise. Since the onset of the Second Intifada, the S'13 has been increasingly deployed for land operations in a LIC environment. This can be attributed to a deliberate decision made by former Israeli Navy Commander Yedidya Yaari. According to Yaari, who was the commander when the Intifada started, "enemy ports had become less relevant and the commandos needed to be retrained to work in the alleys of the Casbah."<sup>149</sup> This decision led to many divers being sent to operate in the "alleys" and, consequently, affected their ability to operate in the water.<sup>150</sup> As a result, it caused some concerns and unhappiness within the S'13 community, among

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<sup>147</sup> Amos Harel and Yoav Stern, "IDF commandos nab five low-level Hezbollah men in Baalbek raid," *Haaretz Service*, August 2, 2006, <http://www.haaretz.com/news/idf-commandos-nab-five-low-level-hezbollah-men-in-baalbek-raid-1.194271> (accessed March 14, 2011); Pedahzur, *The Israeli Secret Services*, 132.

<sup>148</sup> "Israeli commandos launch raid near Tyre," *Mail Online*, August 5, 2006, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-399183/Israeli-commandos-launch-raid-near-Tyre.html> (accessed March 14, 2011); "Israeli Commandos Raid Tyre," *USA Today*, August 5, 2006, [http://www.usatoday.com/news/world/2006-08-04-mideast-fighting\\_x.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/news/world/2006-08-04-mideast-fighting_x.htm) (accessed March 14, 2011).

<sup>149</sup> Pedahzur, *The Israeli Secret Services*, 115.

<sup>150</sup> In fact, personal gain was another reason the divers became more motivated to want to participate. The collaboration with the army helped "break new ground" for them, in terms of promotion and progression within the army ranks.

veterans in particular, as they felt that S'13 participation in these operations had undermined the unit's ability to conduct the tasks for which it was originally established.<sup>151</sup>

### **c. Human Capital and Culture**

Despite several initiatives over the past decade to reduce the burden on reservists and draftees, Israel still has a “people’s army.”<sup>152</sup> Today, Israeli SOF still rely on draftees and, to some degree, reservists. Pertinent to this thesis, the employment of draftees in SO tasks, specifically in CT missions, proves to be especially challenging for SOF, and will likely be even more so in the future.

Draftees in SOF enter service around age eighteen and serve for a period of three years.<sup>153</sup> To be full-fledged SOF members, they have to go through a selection phase, known as *Gibush*; the actual SOF training then lasts (on average) about a year.<sup>154</sup> This means that by the time a draftee joins the SOF community, he would have less than two years of service time left. In addition to a short service time, draftees present another problem: their maturity level.

The ill effects of using draftees for CT missions may be literal and not just figurative. As recently as 2002, Israel set up a rehabilitation village to help former soldiers cope with the mental anguish that they suffered during and after their tours of duty in the IDF. According to Ethan Rabin, “many of them [the soldiers] were veterans of the most prestigious elite units such as Sayeret

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<sup>151</sup> Amos Harel, “Shayetet Commander Price of Choice,” *Haaretz*, July 7, 2004; Amos Harel, “Elite Shayetet unit often carries army’s heaviest, most secretive burdens,” *Haaretz*, June 1, 2010, <http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/news/elite-shayetet-unit-often-carries-army-s-heaviest-most-secrective-burdens-1.293406> (accessed March 14, 2011).

<sup>152</sup> Arik, *Transformation of the Israeli Defense Forces*, 77–84.

<sup>153</sup> “Israel Defence Budget,” *IHS Jane’s*.

<sup>154</sup> Katz, *Israeli Special Forces*, 42, 58. The Israelis call the *Gibush* a “filter” that separates “those we can use from all those who should find employment elsewhere.” In terms of training, the S'13 course lasts for as long as 16 months. Equally important to note is that SOF entrance training is still very much tailored for wartime requirements.

Matkal, the Naval Commandos, and Duchifat.”<sup>155</sup> He adds that many only came to realize their mental problems or crises after they finished their mandatory service. To try to overcome these problems on their own, “Dozens of them went on backpacking trips to the Far East where they became addicted to heroin, cocaine, and other hard drugs. Some tried to commit suicide.”<sup>156</sup>

At least some of the mental problems experienced can be attributed to the demands of the jobs these soldiers undertook during their service in SOF or other elite units. First, they were subject to the elite ethos of “failure is unacceptable.” Second, killing may have been an integral part of their missions. This may have involved innocents or, worse yet, fratricide..<sup>157</sup> Factors like these are bound to exert tremendous pressure on young minds; without the emotional and mental maturity to cope with such pressures, it is understandable that soldiers may just collapse at some point.

Virtually all militaries with SOF recognize that CT tasks require more than just physical preparation, i.e., skills, aptitude, stamina, and strength. Mental toughness and resilience are equally important, and this is where the maturity of individuals is key. In fact, this is precisely the reason why many CT units in the world only employ older volunteers. Not only does Israel’s use of draftees for CT tasks seem questionable, but changing attitudes of youth toward the concept of “national service” makes it even clearer that relying on draftees is not a good idea.

#### **4. Connecting the Dots**

To recapitulate thus far, essentially there are two aspects of culture that bear emphasizing: one is the relationship between a SOF unit, its respective service, and the IDF leadership; the other is the relationship between SOF and

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<sup>155</sup> Ethan Rabin, “What Have I Done! A Hundred Soldiers Treated for ‘Intifada Syndrome’,” *Journal of Palestine Studies*, vol. 32, no. 2 (2003): 100. In November 2002, there were as many as 900 ex-soldiers seeking treatment in the village.

<sup>156</sup> Rabin, “What Have I Done!”

<sup>157</sup> Ibid., 100–1.

other units (to include adjacent SOF units). As we have seen, SOF are generally well regarded and respected by the IDF leadership and their respective services. This is underpinned by the IDF's strong elitist culture and organizational memory, and is further demonstrated by the numerous examples of SOF officers enjoying a successful career not only in the IDF, but also in the Israeli government.<sup>158</sup> However, this favorable environment does not translate into guaranteed support for SOF in terms of budgetary resources or attention. Also, there are two problem areas within SOF. First, there are tensions between SOF and elite units from the same service (mainly Army), and second between SOF from different establishments (i.e., Police, and between Intelligence agencies).

Now that we have examined the structural challenges that plague Israeli SOF, it is time to connect the dots. This is the third step of the four-step process. To be sure, all four components within the Israeli SOF system—Structure, Tasks, Human Capital, and Culture—reveal infirmities in one way or another. To fully understand all the causes and effects of these symptoms, we need to conduct a trace analysis. The trails are shown in Figure 4.

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<sup>158</sup> As mentioned under Resources, many SOF commanders rose to become the top men in their services. Some even went on to serve on the General Staff and as ministers. Also, in one earlier example, S'13 officers were so well regarded by their army comrades during their collaboration in land operations that many received promotions through the army ranks.

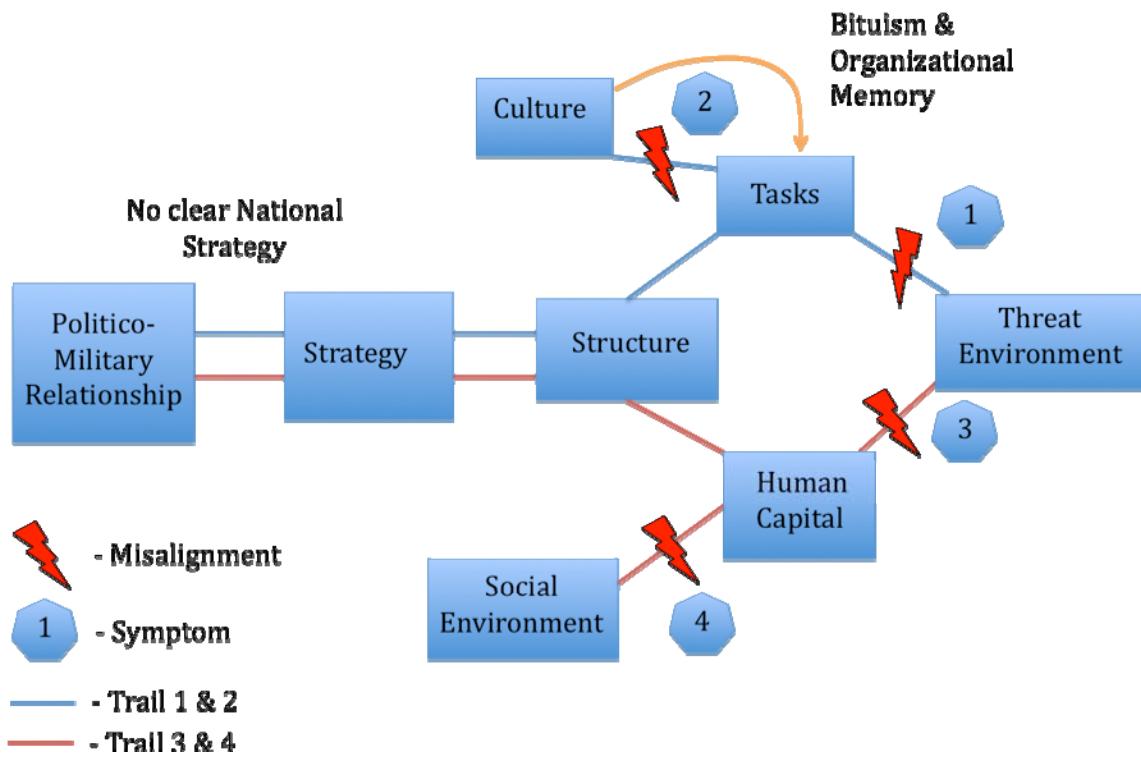


Figure 4. Pathological Analysis of Israeli SOF

**a. Trails 1 and 2**

The first set of symptoms of infirmity point to a misalignment between the Tasks and Threat Environment, and are manifested in two ways. 1) the inadequacy of SOF units in meeting their assigned LIC missions; 2) the dilution of SOF's core skills that may render them unable to meet other core tasks outside the LIC realm (i.e., in the WMD and conventional warfare realms). These two weaknesses result from a poor division of labor, which is a function of both Tasks and Structure. The root causes of such ambiguous task distribution are an unclear national security and unclear military doctrine for SO (for LIC especially), and no oversight organization for SOF. Taking the analysis further, we can also see that this lack of clarity in doctrine is actually the product of a poor political-military relationship.

The second set of weaknesses is to be found in the unhealthy relationships between SOF and elite units, and between SOF from different establishments. This is caused by a misalignment between *Tasks* and *Culture*. Although problems flow from relationships with groups outside the four focal units, their consequences have significant impacts on SO and therefore need to be considered. Here, too, we see a poor division of labor and, as such, the rest of the trail follows Trail 1.

Separately, there are two other aspects of *Culture* that need to be taken into account here, which fall under the *Tasks-Culture* relationship as depicted in the diagram. The first is the IDF commanders' *bituism*, or, more specifically, their knack for improvisation. This cultural aspect contributes to the ambiguity of the task distribution among SOF/elite units. Second is the strong organizational memory and conventional thinking that biases leaders toward high-tech systems. This contributes to the scarce budget availability for SOF which, in turn, affects its task performance. Hence, these factors are seen as a feedback loop feeding from *Culture* to *Tasks* and back.

***b. Trails 3 and 4***

The third set of weaknesses can be attributed to allowing draftees to be used for CT missions, which results from a misalignment between *Human Capital* and the *Threat Environment*. This can be linked to both poor job design and the human resource management system—both of which are *Structural* features [See *Table 1 of Chapter II*]. To find the root cause, one again ends up at doctrinal issues and the political-military relationship or as we saw with Trails 1 and 2.

Social and economic changes have also caused considerable shifts in the perceptions of the population toward the IDF, including (to some degree) SOF. One salient concern for SOF has to be youths' evolving attitude toward service, which will undoubtedly affect the IDF's ability to recruit the right people for SOF. This will pose particular challenges if SOF continue to rely on draftees.

This may feed a fourth set of weaknesses as shown in the diagram, represented by a misalignment between *Human Capital* and the *Social Environment* (the population). Whether this will come to pass depends on the actions the IDF or Israeli government is willing to take at leverage points along Trail 4.

## 5. Generating Insights

In sum, my examination of Israeli SOF strongly suggests that a Service-centric macro-SOF organization is ineffective not only for the long-term stewardship of SOF, but also to meet the short-term demands any government may need to make of SOF. In the end, the macro-structure becomes a conduit for problems at the strategic level to flow through to the operational and tactical levels. One thing the Israeli case demonstrates is what happens when there is a failure to *adapt* the SOF organization to the prevailing environment. This also reinforces the point that *Structure* is often, if not always, the critical interface that connects all three levels.

- a. In an environment where the political-military doctrine for SOF is not clear and there are several (or in the Israeli case numerous) SOF/elite units operating, the military most likely needs to make sure that it has sufficient oversight of these units and their operations. This need will be accentuated if the strategic environment calls for active involvement by SOF (and elite units) in both peacetime and war-time tasks. Under such circumstances, it is imperative that the military set up an oversight body; a key task of this body should be to clearly delineate and enforce the roles and responsibilities of these different units.<sup>159</sup> In addition to establishing a clear division of labor, this body also needs to maintain a long-term view of the strategic environment, and ensure

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<sup>159</sup> For example, in the Israeli case, this may entail the elevation of elite units to SOF status, or expansion of the force size, so as to fulfill the demands for SOF expertise.

that SOF's core skills remain relevant to all threat domains. This may require that the overarching organization work closely with its partners, such as Police and Intelligence agencies, on task distribution so that SOF can maintain the capacity to readily meet all its assigned missions.<sup>160</sup> This organization should, thus, have the official mandate to be the node for SO, not only within the military, but also with other government agencies that carry out similar SO work at the national level. Meanwhile, to decide which oversight structure to adopt (out of the three recommended by NATO), the *Culture* of the organization and *Human Capital*, along with other considerations, need to be factored in.

- b. When a military has a favorable SOF-conventional environment (to include good relations with the top military leaders), SOF may enjoy proper support and attention for operations and their development even when under the conventional services' C2. However, this may not translate into guaranteed resources for SOF, as the Israeli case demonstrates. Although Israel is a unique case where there are many SOF/elite forces competing for the SOF budget, this underscores how important it is to have an oversight agency that can act as a voice for SOF at the strategic level. Better yet, a separate budget for SOF should be given to this agency so that proper SOF development can be assured.
- c. When a military has a well-developed joint culture, as does the IDF, any of the three macro-structures recommended by NATO should work well. Significantly, the organization will not need to be self-sufficient in every aspect, and should be able to lean on adjacent services for support in order to be more cost-effective. However, if such an organization has a strong culture that privileges

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<sup>160</sup> This is especially important for small militaries where human resources are a key concern.

improvisation (*bituism*), and has an ethos of leaders who seek autonomy, a macro-structure with no executive power may prove easy to undermine. In such a case, the organization should only choose between the Component Command or Service structures. For instance, with its favorable SOF-conventional relationship and a strong joint culture, the Component Command would certainly make a great deal of sense, to include economic sense for Israeli SOF.

- d. Israel is probably one of the few countries in the world that still relies heavily on draftees in SO. Consequently, there are a few important things we can learn from its experience. First, draftees should not be deployed for CT missions if this can be avoided. Second, draftees have a limited service life and, so, if they are used for SO, they are better suited for more specific tasks where the needed skills are easily trained and maintained. Lastly, the Israeli experience further highlights the need to look to more professional forces for SO, especially when it comes to CT.

### C. NORWAY

Next we turn to Norwegian SOF (NORSOF) and its macro-organization.<sup>161</sup> NORSOF has an NMSE macro-organization, which is a variant of the Service-centric construct. As described in Chapter I, the NMSE model is comprised of a military staff element at the strategic level that acts as a coordinating body for SO; however, peculiar to the Norwegian model, an additional component in the Norwegian Joint Headquarters (NJHQ, see Figure 4) assists with this function. As we shall see, despite these coordinating mechanisms, problems still exist at the operational and tactical levels between NORSOF's two SOF units. These

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<sup>161</sup> Tom Robertson, *Transforming Norwegian Special Operation Forces* (Monterey, CA: Naval Postgraduate School, June 2006), 37-8. According to Tom Robertson, "the term NORSOF was first used when both units deployed to Afghanistan in 2001/2002 in support of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), and is now a common term for the two units. It has no organizational meaning and merely serves as a common denominator."

problems are largely a consequence of an ineffective NORSOF macro-structure, coupled with vague strategic guidance on SO from the political-military leadership. Interestingly, these problems are not readily apparent given Norway's safe and stable environmental conditions.

## **1. Norway's Environment and National Strategy**

Norway's circumstances in terms of its environment and national strategy are, in many ways, diametrically opposite to those of Israel. For one, its environment, including threats and social conditions, is safe and stable. Second, the political-military relationship is much less ambiguous; there is a distinct separation between the two spheres.<sup>162</sup> Finally, there are also clear national security strategies to guide the transformation of the military to meet political objectives. Nonetheless, because the broader environment in which Norway has been operating is changing, NORSOF faces certain challenges.

Unlike Norway's concerns during the Cold War years, today it has to worry about more than just its territorial defense; there is an equal, if not greater, impetus to worry about global security and stability, especially in the Euro-Atlantic region.<sup>163</sup> Norway recognizes it will continue to need NATO as a hedge against any sizable potential enemy when it comes to national survival. Consequently, NATO has a strong influence on Norway's strategic thinking, which is why NATO is repeatedly referred to as "the cornerstone of Norwegian

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<sup>162</sup> Robertsen, *Transforming Norwegian Special Operation Forces*, 4-5, discusses the interaction between political and military spheres vis-à-vis the policy making process.

<sup>163</sup> Kjetil Mellingen, *Strategic Utilization of Norwegian Special Operations Forces* (Monterey, CA: Naval Postgraduate School, June 2010), 18, 23; Robertsen, *Transforming Norwegian Special Operation Forces*, 47-53. Norway treats "collective security" of the Euro-Atlantic region, societal security and protection of its maritime interests as its main priorities in the order presented. Norway considers collective measures through its various alliances (e.g., NATO and the UN), as critical instruments to ensure its national survival. However, in recent time, NATO has become the more important alliance of the two. Norway's second security priority "concerns the safeguarding of the population and the protection of key societal functions and important infrastructure against" attacks perpetrated by terrorists. Although Norway is safe from such threats now, it recognizes that it may not be insulated forever. Finally, Norway's maritime interests encompass the maritime economic zone and the high seas. "More than 70 percent of national revenues are extracted from activities in NEZ [Norway's Economic Zone], and more than 80 percent of national import and export are shipped through the NEZ."

security policy.”<sup>164</sup> Thanks to this reliance on NATO, and to remain a credible member, Norway has to support NATO’s strategic concept, which means it has to contribute forces to NATO’s “out of area” operations. This, for its part, has helped to make NORSOF an important strategic instrument for policy-makers, with NORSOF considered one of those “relevant capabilities” in Defense Minister Grete Faremo’s repertoire of national tools.<sup>165</sup>

To help the Norwegian Armed Forces (NAF) transform to meet new national security objectives in the post-Cold War, to include meeting NATO’s needs, the government has issued a series of strategic directives over the past decade. The most recent was issued in 2008 and is known as “Parliamentary Bill No. 48” [*A Defense for Protection of Norway’s Security, Interests, and Resources*].<sup>166</sup>

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<sup>164</sup> Petter Hellesen, *Counterinsurgency And Its Implications For The Norwegian Special Operations Forces* (Monterey, CA: Naval Postgraduate School, June 2008), 18; Mellingen, *Strategic Utilization of Norwegian Special Operations Forces*, 22. According to Mellingen, “[Minister of Defense Grete] Faremo proposes a tight relationship between Norwegian interests and the future NATO … [because] the Norwegian Armed Forces is too small to defend Norway’s territory alone.”

<sup>165</sup> Robertsen, *Transforming Norwegian Special Operation Forces*, 5, 56; Mellingen, *Strategic Utilization of Norwegian Special Operations Forces*, 23; Torgeir Gratrud, *Norwegian Special Forces: Their Role in Future Counterinsurgency Operations* (Carlisle, PA: U.S. Army War College, 2009), 1. In 1999, NATO set forth its Strategic Concept which states that member countries must be prepared for operations on a global scale (out of area operations). This also resulted in the creation of the NATO Response Force (NRF), of which NORSOF is an active component today. Further, according to Col Gratrud, “A recent Norwegian Chief of Defense white paper clearly states that Norwegian Special Forces (NORSOF) will continue to be an important force multiplier in future multinational out-of-area operations.”

<sup>166</sup> Robertsen, *Transforming Norwegian Special Operation Forces*, 2; Mellingen, *Strategic Utilization of Norwegian Special Operations Forces*, 15, 16. According to Robertsen, a former Chief Of Defense recognized the need to bring the two tactical forces together, and issued a recommendation in 2004 to create a new SOF unit that would contain all the SOF components in Norway. However, the recommendation was not implemented.

## 2. NORSOF and the NMSE Organization

### a. **Structure and Tasks**

According to Bill No. 48, NORSOF “consists of [only] FSK-HJK and MJK, and that (sic) air assets are support to the two units.”<sup>167</sup> FSK-HJK stands for *Forsvarets Spesialkommando* and *Hærrens Jegerkommando*; it is the Army’s SOF. MJK, which is the acronym for *Marinejegerkommandoen*, is the Navy’s SOF. Both units possess overlapping capabilities and are able to undertake the following four types of missions: (1) Special Reconnaissance and Surveillance, (2) Offensive Operations, (3) Military Assistance, and (4) Counter-Terror Operations.<sup>168</sup> NORSOF’s organizational set-up is shown in Figure 4. In addition to the staff element at the Military-Strategic level (i.e., Special Operations Section in the Defense Staff), an additional Joint component is built into the NJHQ that is peculiar to Norway. This J-3 SOF is meant to enhance the coordination and C2 functions of the macro-level structure; the C2 function is designed specifically for operations.

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<sup>167</sup> Mellingen, *Strategic Utilization of Norwegian Special Operations Forces*, 16; “Norway’s Amphibious and Special Forces,” IHS Jane’s: *Defence & Security Intelligence Analysis*, [http://jasf.janes.com/docs/jASF/browse\\_country](http://jasf.janes.com/docs/jASF/browse_country) (accessed March 14, 2011).

<sup>168</sup> Gratrud, *Norwegian Special Forces*, 10-12; Robertsen, *Transforming Norwegian Special Operation Forces*, 35. See Gratrud’s paper for the exact description of the missions.

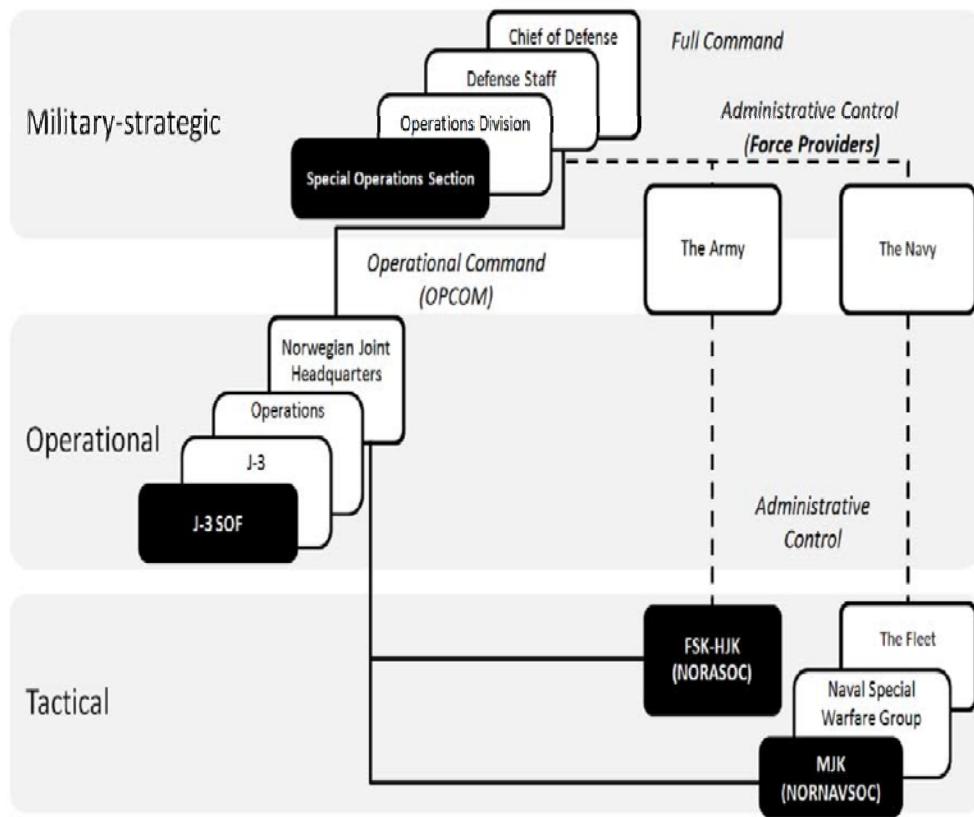


Figure 5. NORSOF Units and Representation at the Three Levels [From Mellingen, p. 95]

Further, the Bill also dictates that the force production function for NORSOF remains with the individual services. Hence, the control that the services have is more than just “administrative;” it is “the total process and activity that conduce to prepare forces ready for effort and includes education and training, human resources management, development of tactics, organization of forces, and material procurement.”<sup>169</sup> As a result, the overarching SOF elements at the strategic and operational levels are relegated to playing nothing more than a coordination role except during operations. According to a Norwegian SOF officer, the NMSE structure has “little power to influence or decide the development of tactical units, budget priorities and

<sup>169</sup> Mellingen, *Strategic Utilization of Norwegian Special Operations Forces*, 96.

training objectives,” as these are the services’ prerogatives.<sup>170</sup> This inability to influence a coherent long-term plan, coupled with unclear strategic direction from the top about SOF’s employment and development leads to two other issues described below.<sup>171</sup>

(1) Failure to Optimize NORSOF. Because the services have the authority to develop NORSOF tactical units, they are able to develop the units in ways that best benefit them, and/or their commanders (somewhat akin to what we saw with Israel).<sup>172</sup> Consequently, the two tactical units have become almost identical in terms of their capabilities with both focusing on “direct capabilities.”<sup>173</sup> Not only has this led to redundant rather than complementary capabilities in NORSOF, but also to a “lack of crucial capabilities in other areas.”<sup>174</sup> It has also caused competition not just between the SOF units, but also with the police.

Equally detrimental to NORSOF (and the state) is the fact that the NMSE structure has not been able to re-orient NORSOF to better meet Norway’s long-term strategic goals. As several Norwegian SOF officers have noted, NORSOF needs to shift its focus beyond direct capabilities if it wants to continue to be a relevant strategic instrument for policy-makers. This is because the alliances that Norway heavily depends on increasingly need contributions of forces with indirect capabilities given the changed realities of the security

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<sup>170</sup> Robertsen, *Transforming Norwegian Special Operation Forces*, 25; Mellingen, *Strategic Utilization of Norwegian Special Operations Forces*, 96.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid., 61. According to Robertsen, “there is no coherent military strategy from which NORSOF roles and missions can be easily derived. Therefore, existing practice and recent political statements are used to grasp the essence of a national military strategy.”

<sup>172</sup> Mellingen, *Strategic Utilization of Norwegian Special Operations Forces*, 100.

<sup>173</sup> As mentioned in an earlier footnote, maritime interests are one of the key priorities for Norway because of Norway’s dependence on the sea. This includes the many offshore oil platforms that are found within the NEZ. Hence, Maritime CT is an important capability in the eyes of the SOF units, both in and outside of NORSOF.

<sup>174</sup> Mellingen, *Strategic Utilization of Norwegian Special Operations Forces*, 8.

environment. In fact, the international operations that Norway has participated in since 2001 reflect just such a demand.<sup>175</sup>

(2) Unfavorable C2 structure for MJK. Although NORSOF has an effective structure for good relations at the strategic level during operations,<sup>176</sup> the same cannot be said when it is under administrative control. As Figure 4 indicates, MJK is “as far away from the strategic level as a command unit can get in Norway.”<sup>177</sup> Even if we only consider MJK’s position within the Navy, it is still undesirable. In contrast to HJK’s optimal C2 relationship in the Army, there are too many layers between MJK and the Chief of Navy. To exacerbate matters, SO are often better understood by the Army than the Navy due to the nature of SO.<sup>178</sup> This distance has deleterious implications for MJK’s development from both the resource perspective, and with regard to whether appropriate attention is given to MJK in general. This, in turn, contributes to uneven development of the two units in NORSOF.<sup>179</sup>

We can identify two additional infirmities associated with NORSOF’s macro-structural design.

(3) Proximity to Decision Makers. A critical feature for analysis under *Structure* is the physical location of the different interrelated agencies. The fact the staff element is located in Oslo does not help when it comes to coordinating with the service chiefs, who are at their respective bases in Bardufoss and Bergen. This issue of physical location has added significance

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<sup>175</sup> Robertsen, *Transforming Norwegian Special Operation Forces*, 73–5; Gratrud, *Norwegian Special Forces*, 13–5; Hellesen, *Counterinsurgency And Its Implications*, 18.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid., 25. Robertsen shows that NORSOF has the appropriate C2 during operations, and is normally at the military-strategic level unless delegated to the operational level (J-3).

<sup>177</sup> Mellingen, *Strategic Utilization of Norwegian Special Operations Forces*, 97.

<sup>178</sup> Robertsen, *Transforming Norwegian Special Operation Forces*, 7. According to Robertsen, “Arguably, HJK is better integrated in the Army than MJK is in the Navy. Small unit tactics, the essence of SOF operations, are more familiar to the Army than the Navy.”

for NMSE structures because NMSE structures rely more heavily on informal rather than formal relationships for their coordination work. In the same vein, J-3 SOF, or, for that matter, the entire NJHQ, is too far from the Defense Staff in Oslo. Since NJHQ (currently in Bodo, Northern Norway) is often the executive arm of the Defense Staff for the C2 of operations, it only makes sense that they should be located close to each other to facilitate the closest possible cooperation during operations, especially during crises. For now, NJHQ relies on Video Teleconferences (VTC) for this purpose. This contributes to unnecessary risk and anxiety during operations.<sup>180</sup>

(4) Linkages to Conventional and Intelligence Forces. For small SOF like NORSOF, working closely with their conventional and intelligence counterparts is not a choice but a must.<sup>181</sup> Appropriate linkages with these support forces are imperative. For example, air capabilities are often a crucial element in SO. But in Norway, air capabilities clearly belong to the conventional forces and do not form part of NORSOF. As Kjetil Mellingen asserts, “The letter [Bill No. 48] mentions 137 Air Wing as a supporting unit, ... [hence] organizational arrangements must be optimized in order to facilitate as good support as possible to NORSOF.”<sup>182</sup> An equally crucial component of SO is Intelligence. From what Torgeir Gratrud writes,

Based on lessons learned from operations especially in Afghanistan, Norwegian Special Forces need to strengthen and further develop their intelligence organization ... The interaction

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<sup>179</sup> Robertsen, *Transforming Norwegian Special Operation Forces*, 25-6; Mellingen, *Strategic Utilization of Norwegian Special Operations Forces*, 97-8. Two examples illustrate this uneven development. First, is the rank of the commander of the two units. Commander MJK is an O-5, whereas Commander HJK is an O-6. Robertson, a MJK officer, writes that “It is commonly known that the further down the chain a unit is located, the more resources are filtered.”

<sup>180</sup> Mellingen, *Strategic Utilization of Norwegian Special Operations Forces*, 100-1.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid., 98, 100, 106; Robertsen, *Transforming Norwegian Special Operation Forces*, 65-6. According to Robertsen, “Although NORSOF can conduct independent missions in the operational or strategic realm, its mission potential is highest in conjunction with conventional operations ... It thus seems important for NORSOF to continue to integrate with the conventional parts of NAF, not only to gain support for its own operations, but also to support naval operations in the littoral. The same logic will apply to new concepts within land and air warfare.”

<sup>182</sup> Mellingen, *Strategic Utilization of Norwegian Special Operations Forces*, 98.

and joint tasking of tactical, operational, and strategic intelligence assets in a tactical operation will certainly provide a more complete picture of an adversary than each of these assets operating alone.<sup>183</sup>

***b. Human Capital and Culture***

Although the NAF still utilizes conscripts, NORSOF mainly employs volunteers. Therefore, NORSOF does not face the same challenges Israeli SOF faces in using conscripts. But NORSOF does face other human capital problems. First, it bears repeating here that NORSOF's poor division of labor is largely a consequence of vague strategic guidance, together with an ineffective *Structure*. For a small nation like Norway, human resources are extremely valuable, and hence, every effort must be made to ensure they are gainfully employed. Having overly redundant capabilities detracts from full optimization.<sup>184</sup> Second, the poor division of labor also leads to unhealthy competition. Although the situation in NORSOF is not as bad as it is in the IDF, in the CT realm there is competition not just between the two NORSOF units, but with the police CT unit as well, which adds an additional complicating factor.<sup>185</sup>

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<sup>183</sup> Gratrud, *Norwegian Special Forces*, 17.

<sup>184</sup> Robertsen, *Transforming Norwegian Special Operation Forces*, 40-42, 71. According to Robertsen, "Consequently, both units have acquired expertise and tasks that naturally should have been in the other SOF unit's domain." He further latches onto the US SOF as an example of redundant and niche capabilities. For example, the USSF is expert in UW missions, while the SEALs are the masters in maritime operations. Between the two forces, there are certain small unit capabilities that are redundant.

<sup>185</sup> Mellingen, *Strategic Utilization of Norwegian Special Operations Forces*, 8, 100; Robertsen, *Transforming Norwegian Special Operation Forces*, 39-40, 42, 67-70. A case in point is the Elektron incident in October 2005. In this case, the MJK, rather than the designated HJK unit, was deployed to intercept the Russian trawler running for Russian territorial waters with the two Norwegian inspectors still onboard. Further, the police also contested the HJK being put on operational duty for domestic onshore CT. Here, Mellingen suggests, the atmosphere between the units was more competitive than cooperative.

### 3. Connecting the Dots

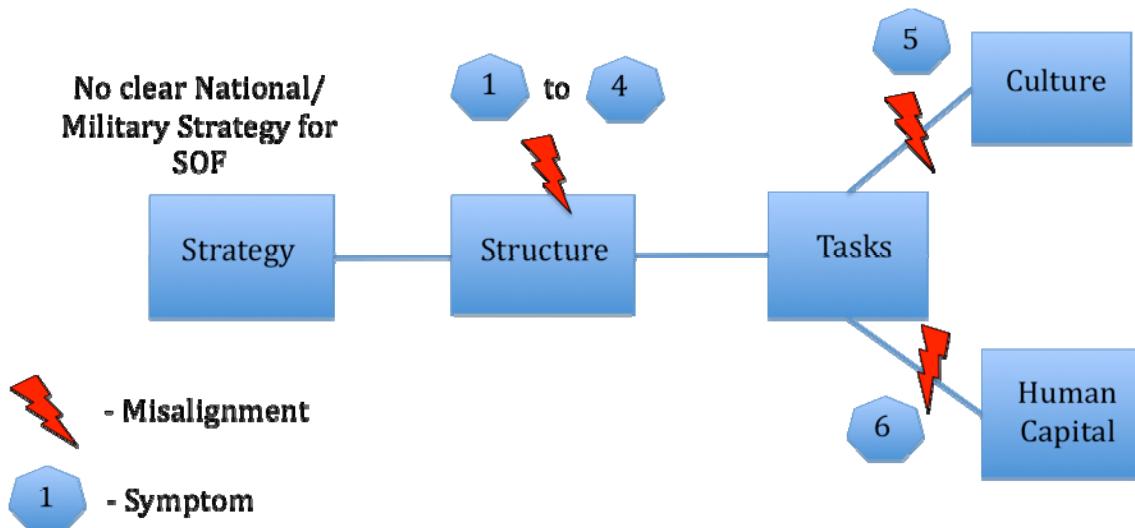


Figure 6. Pathological Analysis of NORSOF

Now that I have described all the weaknesses, the next step is to conduct the trace. The outcome of the trace is illustrated in Figure 6 above. As indicated, the problems stem largely from the poor macro-structure design of NORSOF and strategic guidance on the employment and development of NORSOF that is too vague. The ineffective *Structure* is evidenced by two main weaknesses—Weakness 1: failure to optimize NORSOF, and Weakness 2: uneven development of the two tactical units. These two symptoms illuminate the fact that the NMSE structure has no executive power and, hence, is limited in its ability to provide long-term stewardship of NORSOF. The structure is not able to harmonize and integrate the two tactical units. In the end, the NMSE structure behaves more like a coordinating agency than a command body, even though it does command and control the forces during operations. Two other factors that hint at the structural weakness of the macro-organization are—Weakness 3: more desirable linkages to conventional and intelligence support, and Weakness 4: poor geographical location of the NMSE components vis-à-vis decision makers.

Further, the poor *Structure* and *Strategy* then lead to a poor division of labor between the SOF units. This, in turn, gives rise to the two final weaknesses, which are—Weakness 5: unhealthy culture, and Weakness 6: redundant capabilities.

#### **4. Generating Insights**

In sum, studying the Norwegian case suggests that the NMSE structure is an ineffective way to organize SOF, which further reinforces the NATO SOF Study's findings. This is so even for a small organization like NORSOF, which has only two SOF tactical units. I will now summarize the insights garnered from these NORSOF-specific lessons.

- a. Even in a small organization like NORSOF, with only two tactical units, an oversight authority with executive power is essential for the coherent long-term development of SOF. This is even more important when there is no clear strategic direction from the political-military leadership for SOF. Without an executive mandate, the overarching organization cannot be effective in providing long-term stewardship of SOF; nor will it be able to harmonize and integrate SOF units to strategic ends for the state. However, if the NMSE structure is deemed necessary, then the political-military leadership needs to ensure that there is clear direction for SO. This should include a clear division of labor to preclude unnecessary competition and redundant capabilities. Attention should also be paid to how each service develops the tactical units, to ensure that these units are developed evenly.
- b. When using the NMSE structure, two other critical factors need to be taken into account to help enhance effectiveness. The first relates to the NMSE components vis-à-vis the decision makers. These components have to be located as close to the decision makers as possible so as to provide the necessary impact.

Although it can be argued that proximity is important in all types of structure, it is even more so for the NMSE structure because it lacks executive power. This makes it more dependent on informal relationships. The second factor pertains to the linkages with adjacent support agencies, such as the Air Force and Intelligence. These linkages need to be institutionalized as part of the structure to ensure adequate support is given to SOF.

- c. Lacking the IDF's elitist culture, there are hints in the Norwegian case that Navy SOF could be marginalized when placed under the service's C2. This is because SO is often less understood by the Navy than by the Army.
- d. In a small, developed country, such as Norway, where the population numbers around six million people, human resources are extremely valuable. Therefore, special attention must be paid to fully optimize SOF's human capabilities. To this end, redundant capabilities should be deliberately avoided to prevent wastage of human resources, while still ensuring that the full spectrum of operations can be readily accomplished.

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## IV. COMPONENT COMMAND AND SERVICE CONSTRUCTS: LESSONS FROM FRANCE AND AUSTRALIA

### A. INTRODUCTION

This chapter examines France and Australia, which illustrate the SO Component Command and SO Service constructs, respectively. According to the NATO SOF study, these two models represent a more optimal way to organize SOF at the national level.

### B. FRANCE

The current French macro-organization for SOF is the Special Operations Component Command and is known as the *Commandement des Opérations Spéciales* (COS, or Special Operations Command).<sup>186</sup> According to the NATO SOF Study, the Component Command bears certain similarities to the NMSE model and, yet, they are significantly different. To the degree that they are similar, both are “umbrella” SOF organizations that represent SOF at the military-strategic level and oversee tactical SOF units that are still under the administrative control of the military services. They coordinate and integrate SO to meet the national objectives, and also command and control the tactical units during operations. However, the key difference (and a major one) between the two is that the Component Command has “greater influence and involvement in force management and force development activities” of SOF.<sup>187</sup> As the French case demonstrates, thanks to this difference, the COS is able to provide effective stewardship. It is able to harmonize, integrate, and unify France’s SOF capabilities to meet French national objectives in the immediate term, and, at the same time, orient forces as necessary for the longer-term.

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<sup>186</sup> Eric Micheletti, French Special Forces: Special Operations Command (Paris: Histoire & Collections, 1999), 16.

<sup>187</sup> NSCC, *NATO SOF Study*, 26.

## 1. French Environment, Strategy and Doctrines

### a. *Genesis of COS*

COS was set up in 1992 in the wake of the Gulf War. In many ways, the Gulf War was to France what *Operations Eagle Claw* and *Urgent Fury* were to the U.S. in terms of lessons learned and changes made in their wake.<sup>188</sup> Prior to the Gulf War, French SOF was organized via a Service-centric structure, as Israeli SOF is today. The tactical units were fully under military services' C2, and there was no Joint authority to provide oversight and lateral linkages between and above these units for SO. Consequently, there was considerable friction and little cooperation between these elite units both within and across the services (particularly the Army and Navy).<sup>189</sup> Major interoperability issues surfaced during the Gulf War. As Eric Micheletti notes, “while many assets were available for use at the time . . . these did not form a coherent group of military operational assets.” There was “little commonality of equipment and an absence of set operational procedures.”<sup>190</sup> The Gulf War experience proved humbling, not

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<sup>188</sup> Lucien S. Vandenbroucke, *Perilous Options: Special Operations As An Instrument of US Foreign Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 114-151; Thomas K. Adams, *US Special Operations Forces in Action: The Challenge of Unconventional Warfare* (Oregon: Frank Cass, 2001), 189-93. In November 1979, a mob of Islamic fundamentalists overran the US embassy in Tehran, seizing 63 diplomats and embassy personnel, which began the Iranian hostage crisis that lasted for 444 days. The US then launched a rescue operation, called *Operation Eagle Claw* (otherwise known as *Desert One*), in April 1980 to rescue the hostages. The operation ended in a fiasco, largely because of poor operational planning and C2, and numerous interoperability and aircraft problems. *Urgent Fury* was another rescue operation conducted in October 1983 on the Caribbean island of Grenada to evacuate up to 600 Americans trapped there. In this operation, SOF units (SEALs, Delta Force, and Rangers) were the first ashore. Once again, as in *Desert One*, the effectiveness of SOF left much to be desired. These two operational failures are the events many cite as leading to the transformation of the US SOF system.

<sup>189</sup> Stephan Sjoberg, *The Evolution of the French Special Forces: Experiences from the Past, Adapted for the Future* (Stockholm, Sweden: Swedish Defence Research Agency, June 2004), 32-4.

<sup>190</sup> Micheletti, *French Special Forces*, 8.

only for French SOF, but also for the armed forces as a whole.<sup>191</sup> As former Socialist President François Mitterrand (1981–95) remarked:

France's experience of participating in a multinational force commanded by a US general under NATO procedures . . . was both humiliating and revealing—particularly for the military. Any illusion which might have remained about France's (and Europe's) capacity to underwrite the collective security of the continent was shattered in the Saudi Arabian desert.<sup>192</sup>

Not long after the end of the Gulf War, the French military was put to work by the new Armed Forces Chief of Staff to resolve deficiencies exposed during the campaign. Major General Maurice Le Page was tasked to conduct a feasibility study to improve the use of SOF from the three services. The outcome of his study pointed to the need for a joint special forces command, one that reported directly to the Armed Forces Chief of Staff. Not surprisingly, this proposal of a “joint” command was readily accepted by the new Chief of Staff, whose new focus for the French Armed Forces was in the areas of jointness, deployability, and mobility. In addition to the COS, several other joint entities were created, namely the Joint Command Staff (COIA, *Centre Operationnel Inter-Armees*), Joint Planning Staff (EMIA, *Etat-Major Inter-Armees*), and Military Intelligence Agency (DRM, *Direction du Renseignement Militaire*).<sup>193</sup>

COS faced a number of coordination and integration issues from the force providers as it tried to blend French SOF into an effective asset.<sup>194</sup> As

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<sup>191</sup> Sjoberg, *The Evolution of the French Special Forces*, 34-5. In the Gulf War in 1990, the French military demonstrated that it did not have the intervention capacity it officially said it did. While Britain had a smaller military force at the time, it was able to deploy four times as many troops as France. More importantly for SOF, the lack of capacity resulted in its inability to perform roles like those carried out by its Anglo-Saxon counterparts.

<sup>192</sup> Gisela Müller-Brandeck-Bocquet, *France's New NATO Policy: Leveraging a Realignment of the Alliance?* (Maxwell AFB: Air University, Winter 2009), 96–7.

<sup>193</sup> Sjoberg, *The Evolution of the French Special Forces*, 8, 35–6; Micheletti, *French Special Forces*, 8-10; Lars Zimmermann, *Britain, France, And Germany: Priorities For The European Union's Security And Defense Policy* (Monterey, CA: Naval Postgraduate School, December 2009), 22-3.

<sup>194</sup> From the outset, the French SOF already had units from all three conventional services – Navy, Army, and Air Force.

one former COS commander commented, “we were perceived as trouble-makers and competitors.”<sup>195</sup> There are at least two plausible explanations for such negative reactions toward COS initially: (1) a conventional mindset left over from the Cold War era, and (2) the lack of a clear and coherent doctrine on the employment and development of SOF.<sup>196</sup> Although General Page did try to answer to the latter when he was designing COS, it could be that the boundaries he set were not clear enough to be effective or that the idea gained insufficient traction with the other services. Suffice it to say, it took COS some (or even many) years of working with the services to create a coherent doctrine for the employment and development of SOF. Arguably, what also helped was a change in the national-military strategy and mindset through the Defense White Paper 1994 and *MPL 97-02*.<sup>197</sup>

In the U.S., the aftermath of *Operations Eagle Claw* and *Urgent Fury* led to legislation (e.g., *Goldwater-Nichols Act* and the *Nunn-Cohen Amendment*, both adopted in 1986) that aimed to not only overhaul SOF, but also the way the U.S. military conducted business.<sup>198</sup> The various French Defense White Papers and Military Program Laws (MPLs) that came after the Gulf War could be said to have had similar aims. The 1994 Defense White Paper set the tone for transformation of the French Armed Forces. Apart from describing the new strategic environment, the White Paper emphasized key capabilities (such as a joint armed forces and a strong logistical support

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<sup>195</sup> Micheletti, French Special Forces, 12.

<sup>196</sup> Sjoberg, The Evolution of the French Special Forces, 38. According to Sjoberg, many problems during and before the Gulf War were related to a complete lack of doctrine pertaining to SO.

<sup>197</sup> Micheletti, French Special Forces, 11–2. According to Micheletti, it took COS years to “overcome the reluctance of the different services” and years to be able to bring French SOF together as an effective mixture. To do this, COS had to work with the units as well as the Chiefs of Staff of the different services to draw up coherent doctrine on common procedures, explicit training, and acquisition directives.

<sup>198</sup> Susan L. Marquis, *Unconventional Warfare: Rebuilding US Special Operations Forces* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 1997), 117–46; Senate Committee on Armed Services, *Defense Reorganization: The Need for Change*, Staff Report, 99 Cong. 1 Session (Government Printing Office, October 1985), 1–12. For more details, see Marquis and the Staff Report.

capability) for the new era. More importantly, it underlined the strategic role and importance of SOF.<sup>199</sup> The concepts in the White Paper were then put into action by the *MPLs*; there were three in total—*MPL 97-02, 03-08, and 09-15*. These were designed to move the French Armed Forces to a “2015 armed forces model.”<sup>200</sup>

*MPL 97-02* was as important for SOF as the decision to set up COS was for the Armed Forces. Its clear delineation of roles and responsibilities helped to provide a focus for COS and the tactical SOF units which, in turn, minimized the likelihood of unnecessary competition and antagonism between these agencies.<sup>201</sup> Clearly, this is a strength of the French system that sets it apart from the Israeli and Norwegian cases.

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<sup>199</sup> Sjoberg, *The Evolution of the French Special Forces*, 7–8.

<sup>200</sup> Thierry Tardy, “France: Between Exceptionalism and Orthodoxy,” in *Global Security Governance: Competing Perceptions of Security in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, ed. Emil J. Kirchner and James Sperling (New York: Routledge, 2007), 29, 35–7. The *MPL 97-02* means for years 1997 to 2002. The same applies to the other two *MPLs*.

<sup>201</sup> Sjoberg, *The Evolution of the French Special Forces*, 9–11, 36–7. According to Sjoberg, this division of labor was part of General Page’s concept when he was designing COS. However, it was not clear from my research whether this was officially endorsed and implemented along with COS’s establishment. Given the dynamics between COS and the other services at the time, along with the fact that this proposal implicated more than just the military agencies, it seems more prudent to assume that a far-reaching change like this needed to be made through a more official declaration like the *MPL 97-02*. Hence, I would argue that *MPL 97-02* deserves the credit.

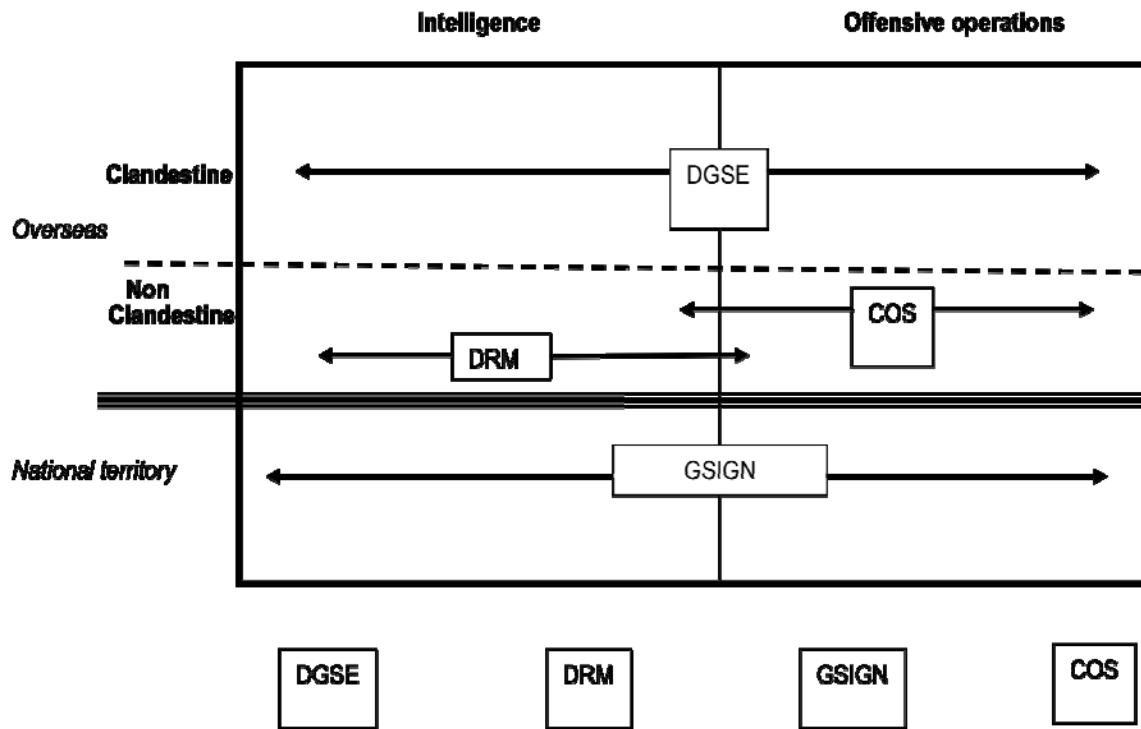


Figure 7. Division of Labor Between COS and Other Agencies  
 [From Sjoberg, p. 37]

A testament to COS's effectiveness as an overarching organization for French SOF lies in the fact that there has been no need for any major changes since its implementation more than a decade ago. As will be shown in the next two sections, COS has been able to orient and adjust the French system effectively over the past two decades, ensuring that SOF remains a relevant strategic instrument.<sup>202</sup> Consequently, as acknowledged by the latest 2008 Defense White Paper (known as *Livre Blanc 2008*), SOF continues to be regarded as a critical national asset by the French government. It fulfills not only what Colin Gray terms the economy of force role, but also offers an expansion of

<sup>202</sup> Micheletti, French Special Forces, 13; Sjoberg, The Evolution of the French Special Forces, 39.

choice for policy makers.<sup>203</sup> To better understand how French SOF satisfies these roles in current terms, let us turn to the French national security strategy.

**b. French National Security Strategy, *Livre Blanc 2008***

As we saw for Norway, the new security environment for France after the demise of the Soviet Union has been dominated by diffuse threats “originating from non-state actors, and containing an important non-military dimension.”<sup>204</sup> In the new era, the probability of a total war is close to zero; however, France “has grown more vulnerable than it was at the end of the Cold War.”<sup>205</sup> In *Livre Blanc 2008*, the top security concerns are “international terrorism, weapons proliferation, and deepening ties between state and nonstate actors.” Among these, President Nicholas Sarkozy singles out terrorism as the “immediate threat.”<sup>206</sup> Further, the White Paper also identifies two overall security objectives for the national strategy:

- To enable France to contribute to European and international security: this corresponds both to its own security needs, which also extend beyond its frontiers, and to the responsibility shouldered by France within the framework of the United Nations and the alliances and treaties, which it has signed.

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<sup>203</sup> Colin S. Gray, *Explorations in Strategy* (New York: Praeger, 1998), 168-74. For Economy of Force, Gray means SOF can be a force multiplier providing disproportionate effects with its relatively small size and resources required. By Expansion of Choice he means SOF can provide additional options (military force) to policy/military leaders in the form of a flexible, small visibility, and precise instrument. This is on top of other alternatives like diplomacy or economic tools. However, in some cases, these tools will be ineffective, which is when SOF will come in most handy.

<sup>204</sup> Tardy, “France: Between Exceptionalism and Orthodoxy,” 26.

<sup>205</sup> Zimmermann, *Britain, France, And Germany*, 25.

<sup>206</sup> Leo G. Michel, *Defense Transformation à la française and U.S. Interests* (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University, September 2008), 2.

- To defend the values of the ‘republican compact’ that binds all French people to the State, namely the principles of democracy, and in particular individual and collective freedoms, respect for human dignity, solidarity and justice.<sup>207</sup>

Underlying these objectives is the deeply rooted French political-military culture, which is “based on the sacrosanct principles of autonomous decision-making and independent defence (sic) capabilities.”<sup>208</sup> The latter means that France must have the capacity to act alone or to apply force when its national interests so dictate. It is this attachment to “freedom of action” that makes French SOF a key strategic instrument. More precisely, it is this willingness to act alone when push comes to shove that allows SOF to provide France an “expanded option” when all other measures fail.<sup>209</sup> As the White Paper suggests, “French military operations undertaken on a national basis would henceforth be limited to ‘special’ operations” and “middle-scale operations.” In more specific terms, these SOF-related operations were to most often be conducted under the ambit of either the *Protection*, *Intervention* or even *Prevention* functions identified in *Livre Blanc 2008*.<sup>210</sup>

Under *Protection*, the White Paper identifies SOF as a key asset in the fight against terrorism. Although domestic terrorism issues mainly fall under

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<sup>207</sup> Zimmermann, Britain, France, And Germany, 26.

<sup>208</sup> Bastien Irondelle and Sophie Besancenot, “France: A Departure from Exceptionalism,” in National Security Cultures: Patterns of Global Governance, ed. Emil J. Kirchner and James Sperling (New York: Routledge, 2010), 22.

<sup>209</sup> Zimmermann, Britain, France, And Germany, 30; Tardy, “France: Between Exceptionalism and Orthodoxy,” 25–45, 37. According to Tardy, “France has a preference for persuasive rather than coercive instruments in meeting security threats, but does not rule out the use of force in principle or practice; the use of force is part of France’s political-military culture.” Further, Zimmerman says that, “With a policy similar to that of Britain, France considers the use of force to be the last resort once all other measures have been actively exploited.”

<sup>210</sup> Michel, Defense Transformation à la française, 3. The five strategic functions are: Knowledge and Anticipation, Prevention, Protection, Deterrence, and Intervention.

the jurisdiction of the national police and Gendarmerie Nationale,<sup>211</sup> the government recognizes that “there is a growing interconnection between threats and risks and a continuity between internal and external security.”<sup>212</sup> Most of these threats originate from overseas, such as from failed or unstable states. Accordingly, “there is an increasing role for the military” in the foreign dimension of *Protection*, especially “with regard to special covert operations.”<sup>213</sup> The idea of employing SOF to *protect* French citizens and national interests by *preventing* the emergence of such threats from overseas can also be considered a *Prevention* function.<sup>214</sup>

For *Intervention*, the paper outlines three possible scenarios when France would intervene unilaterally: to protect French citizens overseas, to fulfill bilateral defense arrangements, and in “a specific, fast-breaking event directed against [French] interests.”<sup>215</sup> According to the paper, SOF can be employed to “free hostages or pursue terrorists,” or for “middle-scale operations such as the evacuation of French people in hostile environments, or selective . . . operations as a response to a direct action against French interests.”<sup>216</sup> There are at least 1.5 million French citizens living overseas. The paper notes that these citizens are especially exposed to asymmetric threats in the new era.<sup>217</sup>

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<sup>211</sup> Samuel M. Katz, *The Illustrated Guide to the World’s Top Counter-Terrorist Forces* (Hong Kong: Concord Publications Co., 2001), 116-24; Gary J. Schmitt, *Safety, Liberty, and Islamist Terrorism* (Washington, D.C.: The AEI Press, 2010), 34-45. Before the September 11 incident, the terrorist threats France faced were largely from Algerian, Palestinian, radical leftist, Basque and Corsican separatist and partisan groups. The lessons gleaned from these early experiences helped France to develop what is known as the “French counterterrorism system,” which is employed today. This system is targeted mainly at domestic terrorism issues, and hence involves the national police, the Gendarmerie Nationale and the *juges d’instruction* (investigative magistrates). For more information on this system, see Schmitt.

<sup>212</sup> Irondelle and Besancenot, “France: A Departure from Exceptionalism,” 23.

<sup>213</sup> Ibid., 34.

<sup>214</sup> Ibid., 27. According to *Livre Blanc 2008*, “the aim of prevention is to avoid the emergence or aggravation of threats to our national security. The main prevention tools are: military bases . . . African peacekeeping capabilities, arms control, and the fight against the proliferation of” WMD.

<sup>215</sup> Michel, *Defense Transformation à la française*, 3.

<sup>216</sup> Irondelle and Besancenot, “France: A Departure from Exceptionalism,” 37.

<sup>217</sup> Zimmermann, *Britain, France, And Germany*, 25.

To date, there have been a number of instances when French SOF have been used for these purposes:

(1) *Intervention* to protect French citizens overseas. The year 2008 can be considered a very successful year for French SO. In April 2008, COS units were deployed to Northern Somalia to help resolve a hostage situation involving a French luxury cruise ship. “An hour after the pirates had accepted a \$2m (£1m) ransom and released the yacht and its 30-strong crew,” they were attacked by COS units on shore in Northern Somalia (assets involved were mainly the helicopters and a sniper). The SOF units captured six Somali pirates and recovered part of the ransom.

Five months later, in September 2008, a similar hostage situation occurred again in the now-infamous Gulf of Aden. A retired French couple was taken hostage onboard their yacht by seven Somali pirates. As soon as the French forces stationed in Djibouti received the hijack signal, the French Commando Hubert unit based in France was activated and flown to the incident area. Initially, the French government attempted to negotiate with the pirates for the release of the couple, and also to “dissuade them from taking the yacht to Eyl, the main lair of Somali pirates.” However, when the French forces realized the pirates were not going to comply, military action became inevitable. In the end, the Hubert unit had to be deployed (involving first parachuting and then diving to the target). The rescue mission ran like clockwork, and the two hostages were freed. Six of the pirates were captured and one killed, with no other casualties.<sup>218</sup>

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<sup>218</sup> Charles Bremner, “French special forces seize pirates in operation to free yacht hostages,” The Times (London), September 17, 2008, <http://www.lexisnexis.com.libproxy.nps.edu/lncui2api/results/docview> (accessed January 26, 2011); John Lichfield, “French commandos seize Somali pirates after yacht hostages freed,” The Independent (London), April 12, 2008, <http://www.lexisnexis.com.libproxy.nps.edu/lncui2api/results/docview> (accessed January 26, 2011).

Following the second operation against Somali pirates, one that Mr. Sarkozy personally supervised, the president warned at a news conference:

This operation is a warning to all those engaged in this criminal activity. France will not accept that crime pays . . . These are not isolated cases, but a fully fledged criminal industry. (It) endangers our fundamental rights, freedom of movement and international trade. The world must not remain indifferent or passive. I call on other countries to take their responsibilities as France has done twice.<sup>219</sup>

(2) *Protection and Prevention* through Military Assistance, Peacekeeping, and *Intervention*. Because Africa remains “a top strategic concern for France” even in post-colonial times, SOF’s advisory or peacekeeping role on the continent retains strategic significance.<sup>220</sup> The French government has also recently committed French forces, including SOF, to NATO operations in Afghanistan. It did so after renewing its allegiance to NATO. By committing an important asset like SOF to such a mission, the government not only fulfills the *Protection* dimension of its national strategy, but demonstrates its commitment to NATO. According to some senior British military chiefs, French SOF represented “a highly flexible force, able to roam the country, attacking Taliban forces wherever they posed a threat.”<sup>221</sup>

Although domestic threats are normally taken care of by the national police and Gendarmerie, COS units can be called upon to *protect* national security or interests at home in the area of maritime CT or intervention. Two such operations occurred in July and September 1995. The two incidents were similar in nature and were carried out by Greenpeace activists against

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<sup>219</sup> Bremner, “French special forces seize pirates in operation to free yacht hostages.”

<sup>220</sup> Michel, *Defense Transformation à la française*, 5. The security challenges in Africa “from regional and ethnic conflicts to terrorist threats (particularly in the Sahel), drug trafficking, and mass dislocation of populations—have direct and indirect impact on French interests.”

<sup>221</sup> Colin Brown, “French troops for Afghan force; NATO relations boosted in controversial decision,” *Canberra Times (Australia)*, April 5, 2008, <http://www.lexisnexis.com.libproxy.nps.edu/lncui2api/results/docview> (accessed January 26, 2011).

French nuclear testing. In both operations, the French Commando Hubert unit successfully intercepted the “*Rainbow Warrior*” as it attempted to cross into French territorial waters.<sup>222</sup>

Finally, France’s re-entry into NATO is certainly likely to boost SOF’s strategic value in the government’s eyes. Because of the “*La grande nation*” mentality that is rooted in France’s political-military culture, France continues to harbor the hope of remaining “a great military power.”<sup>223</sup> The White Paper emphasizes that “France must be able to serve as a ‘framework nation’—that is, capable of commanding a joint and combined force; lead any one of its components (land, air, maritime, special forces); and be among the ‘first entry’ forces.”<sup>224</sup> This statement also very much reflects the French realization that in the post-Cold War world, it has no choice but to embrace multilateralism.<sup>225</sup> To this end, in addition to the usual SOF tactical units the French government depends on as strategic instruments, it can now also turn to COS for the same strategic purpose. In fact, with COS, France will be able to be the framework nation for SO in NATO.

## 2. COS and French SOF

### a. ***Structure and Tasks***

“The Special Operations Command (COS) is a joint operational command under the direct authority of CEMA, the French Armed Forces Chief of Staff.”<sup>226</sup> It is an overarching organization that brings together in a single entity the disparate SOF units from the different services. Its official mission is “to plan,

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<sup>222</sup> Micheletti, *French Special Forces*, 19. The *Rainbow Warrior* is the vessel carrying the Greenpeace activists.

<sup>223</sup> Michel, *Defense Transformation à la française*, 1; Zimmermann, *Britain, France, And Germany*, 26. According to Zimmerman, one of Mr Sakorzy’s goals in *Livre Blanc 2008* is to “ensure that France remains a major military and diplomatic power.”

<sup>224</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>225</sup> Tardy, “France: Between Exceptionalism and Orthodoxy,” 32.

<sup>226</sup> Micheletti, *French Special Forces*, 27. COS is located in Taverny, just north of Paris.

coordinate and conduct at the command level all operations carried out by units that are specifically organized, trained and equipped to attain military or paramilitary objectives as defined by the Armed Forces Chief of Staff (CEMA—Chef d'Etat-Major des Armees).<sup>227</sup> This involves, but is not limited to, standardization of procedures and equipment between SOF units to ensure full interoperability and the actual C2 of SOF operations. COS only has operational C2 of the executive SOF units, while the services retain the raise-train-sustain functions. However, COS also has the authority to influence and be involved in the force management and development of SOF. Hence, it has to work very closely with the services to ensure all SOF's activities are aligned with its "grand masterplan." Additionally, COS also has to "share" employment of the tactical units with the services.

To ensure that COS has the capacity to execute all its mandated functions, COS headquarters (HQ) is staffed with about 60 personnel, distributed as follows: Army (39%), Navy (25%), Air Force (25%), Others (e.g., representatives of the Gendarmes) (11%). These representatives are further divided into six Bureaus that each oversees one core task area. The six Bureaus are: Operations, Specialized Training, Research and Development (R&D), Telecommunications and Information Systems, Civil/Military Action, and General Services.<sup>228</sup> These Bureaus are designed to facilitate accomplishment of COS's core tasks.<sup>229</sup> In addition, to ensure that COS has a tight connection with the services that are its force providers, a representative from each service acts as a

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<sup>227</sup> Micheletti, *French Special Forces*, 9.

<sup>228</sup> Sjoberg, *The Evolution of the French Special Forces*, 22; Micheletti, *French Special Forces*, 13, 27, 32. For more information on the exact function of each Bureau, refer to page 32 of Micheletti.

<sup>229</sup> In addition to those mentioned, other examples of core activities are intelligence support during operations (Operations Bureau), long-term capabilities planning (R&D Bureau), and administrative tasks (General Services).

liaison. These liaisons come not only from the three conventional services, but also from the Medical Corp and the French Gendarmerie (GSIGN).<sup>230</sup> The set-up of COS is shown in Figure 8:

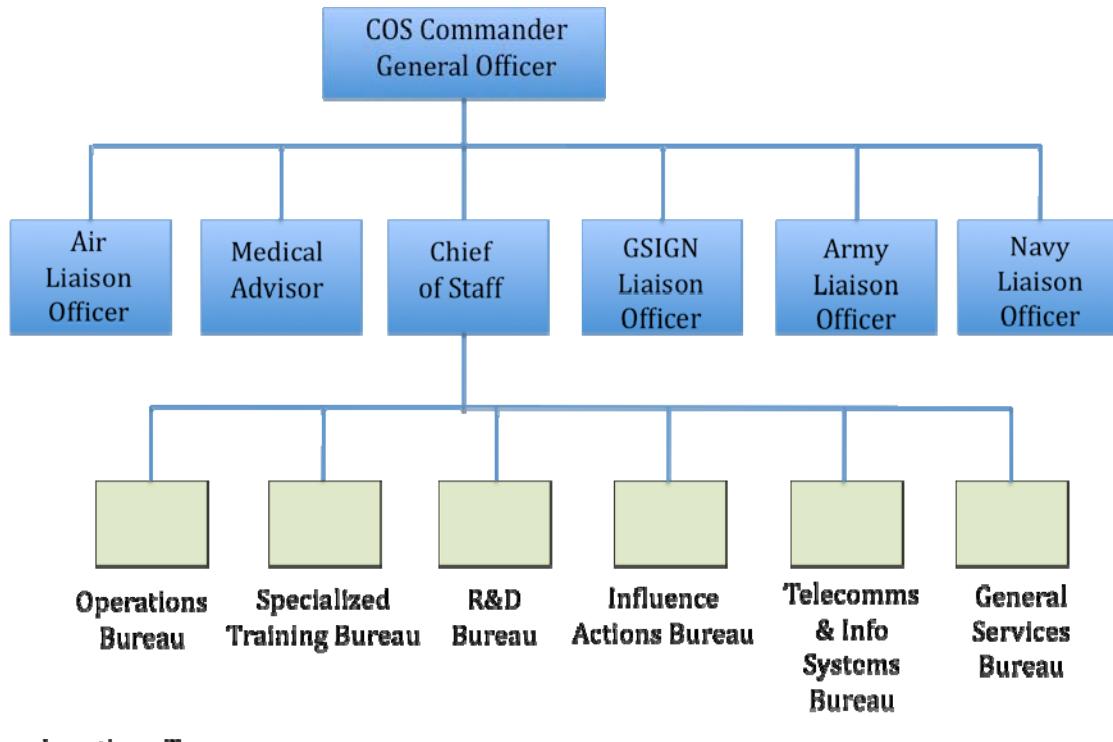


Figure 8. The COS Organization [From Micheletti, p. 158]

At COS's direct disposal are the SOF units from the three conventional services; these action and support/projection units belong to what is known as the *First Circle*. Because the French system recognizes that SOF might not have all the expertise necessary to confront the diffuse threat environment, SOF has to be able to reach out to other support entities. This gives rise to units in the *Second Circle*, which are prepared, trained for, and able to support SOF activities. Examples of these *Second Circle* units are elite units

<sup>230</sup> Micheletti, French Special Forces, 150; Katz, The Illustrated Guide to the World's Top Counter-Terrorist Forces, 116–124. GSIGN (Groupement de Securite et d'Intervention de la Gendarmerie Nationale) is the elite organization of the French Gendarmerie that contains the EPIGN (Escadron de Protection et d'Intervention de la Gendarmerie Nationale – Parachutist Security and Assault team), and the famous GIGN (Groupe d'Intervention Gendarmerie Nationale – French domestic CT unit).

of GSIGN (mainly GIGN and EPIGN), 17<sup>th</sup> RGP (Airborne Engineer Regiment) and GCP parachutists. This thesis focuses only on units in the *First Circle*, shown in Figure 9. Taken together, the entire size of the French SOF system, which is composed primarily of these units, has close to 3,000 personnel.<sup>231</sup>

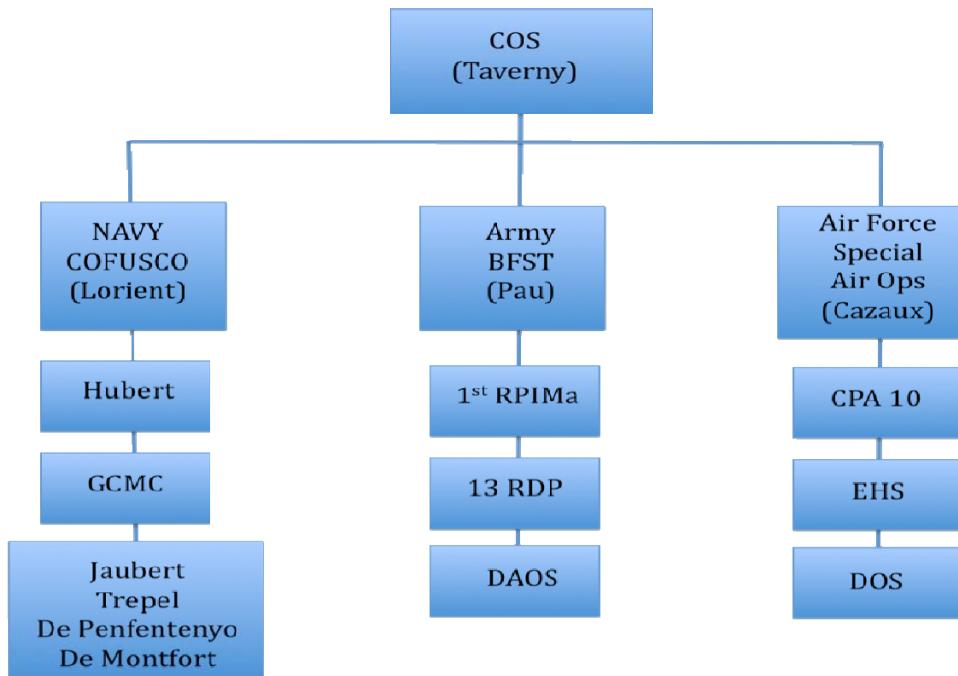


Figure 9. SOF Units in the First Circle [From Synthesis of Sjoberg and Micheletti]

According to the official mission statement for units in the *First Circle*, these units: “Undertake wide-ranging, targeted and control (sic) actions, limited in both time and space, against the enemy’s centres of gravity.”<sup>232</sup> The essential tasks are: military assistance, military support operations, counter-terrorism, and influence operations.<sup>233</sup> Although the SOF units may need to

<sup>231</sup> Micheletti, *French Special Forces*, 156; “France’s Amphibious and Special Forces,” IHS Jane’s: *Defence & Security Intelligence Analysis*, [http://jasf.janes.com/docs/jasf/browse\\_country](http://jasf.janes.com/docs/jasf/browse_country) (accessed March 15, 2011). The 17<sup>th</sup> RGP is a specialist bomb disposal unit, and the GCP units are conventional elite commandos.

<sup>232</sup> Sjoberg, *The Evolution of the French Special Forces*, 22.

<sup>233</sup> Micheletti, *French Special Forces*, 9. A key point to highlight is that the personnel in these SOF units are all volunteers. The French government scrapped its conscript system in 1996.

possess overlapping capabilities to perform this spectrum of tasks, such as in the area of insertions/extractions, each has its own niche area.

(1) *Commandement des Fusiliers et Commandos* (COFUSCO) is the Navy organization that is responsible for the naval commandos. As shown in Figure 9, it has under its command the four assault units, one close quarter battle group (*Groupe de Combat en Milieu*, GCMC), and the Underwater Action Unit (Hubert). Additionally, it has at its direct disposal the support elements for naval SO, for example, the diving support vessel *Poseidon*. COFUSCO reports directly to the Navy Chief of Staff and is “both the Navy equivalent of COS and the Navy representative to the Joint Commission.” More importantly, COFUSCO and its units do not perform tasks only for COS. They have to be shared with the French Navy.<sup>234</sup> The action units within COFUSCO are:

- GCMC: “Only the best get through the selection process—about four per year.” This statement speaks for itself. GCMC is the crème de la crème of the French naval commandos. It is the maritime counter-terrorist unit that specializes in resolving maritime hostage situations and recovering ships from terrorists. The average age of the members in this unit is 28. The unit works regularly with the B platoon of Commando Hubert, as the latter can be the supplementary or back-up force when needed. GIGN personnel are also often involved in cross-training to make sure CT procedures are harmonized across units.<sup>235</sup>
- Commando *Hubert* specializes in underwater special warfare. It has four platoons (A, B, C, and D), with each

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<sup>234</sup> Micheletti, French Special Forces, 158; “France’s Amphibious and Special Forces,” IHS Jane’s; Sjoberg, The Evolution of the French Special Forces, 39. Apparently, there is no reported animosity between COS and the services (Navy and Air Force) when it comes to sharing of the SOF units.

<sup>235</sup> Micheletti, French Special Forces, 74–5.

platoon having its own sub-specialty. For example, as already mentioned, the B platoon has CT capabilities similar to those of GCMC. However, it also possesses underwater capabilities that the GCMC does not have. Another example is C platoon. This platoon operates the swimmer delivery vehicles (PSM), and takes care of the crew and maintenance as well. According to Micheletti, “[Commando Hubert] is completely unique, with underwater capabilities specific to no other organization of the French Navy.” The average age of the members is 30.<sup>236</sup>

- Commando Assault Units (*Jaubert, Trepel, de Penfentenyo, and de Montfort*) specialize in amphibious landings, maritime assaults, and reconnaissance. Each unit also has a sub-specialty. For example, *de Penfentenyo* is expert in maritime reconnaissance while *de Montfort* undertakes mostly maritime sabotage and air guidance missions.<sup>237</sup>

(2) *Brigade des Forces Speciales Terre* (BFST) is the Army equivalent of COFUSCO; it contains all the Army SOF units. As the figure illustrates, units that make up army SOF are: *1<sup>st</sup> RPIMa, DAOS and 13 RDP*. This brigade structure was only adopted in July 2002, as a result of the addition of *13 RDP* to the Army SOF fold. Unlike Navy SOF, that has a dual COS and Navy role, units in *BFST* are solely obligated to COS’s missions. However, *BFST* still acts as the interface between the Army Staff and COS.<sup>238</sup>

- *1er Régiment Parachutiste d’Infanterie de Marine* (*1<sup>st</sup> RPIMa*): “This unit is the direct descendant of French World

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<sup>236</sup> Micheletti, French Special Forces, 83; Sjoberg, The Evolution of the French Special Forces, 26.

<sup>237</sup> Micheletti, French Special Forces, 58-68; “France’s Amphibious and Special Forces,” IHS Jane’s; Sjoberg, The Evolution of the French Special Forces, 26.

<sup>238</sup> Although units in BFST are solely for COS, the raise-train-sustain function is still under the Army. Hence, there is this need for an interface between COS and the Army Staff.

War II SAS trained paratroops and has kept up not only the esprit de corps of its predecessors . . . but also its mission.” Its main missions are land-based strategic direct action and reconnaissance, and military operational assistance to third countries allied to France.<sup>239</sup> The regiment has some members trained in specialized areas, including combat diving, CT missions, and military free-fall.<sup>240</sup> But the aim in having these specialties is to make the regiment self-sufficient when deployed, and not to enable it to compete with other forces.<sup>241</sup>

- 13 *Regiment de Dragons Parachutistes* (13 RDP) specializes in intelligence collection, particularly *Human Intelligence* (HUMINT). It was originally part of the Military Intelligence agency (DRM). However, after the Gulf War and other combat engagements in the 1990s, the decision was made to incorporate it into COS.<sup>242</sup>
- *ALAT*<sup>243</sup> Special Operations Detachment (DAOS): This detachment consists of helicopters that are dedicated to supporting SO carried out by all COS units. It comprises two arms—1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> EOS (*Escadrille*, or squadron—the former is responsible for transportation and the latter for

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<sup>239</sup> Strategic reconnaissance involves long range, behind-enemy-lines infiltration and intelligence collection. Direct action involves traditional commando raiding, urban operations, sniping, and inland CSAR operations. Lastly, military assistance includes personnel security missions like VIP-escort.

<sup>240</sup> The CT missions are more along the lines of general close quarter battle, sometimes known as urban warfare, and not specialized hostage rescue. Military free-fall skills are HALO/HAHO (High Altitude Low Opening/High Opening) and include tandem capabilities.

<sup>241</sup> Micheletti, *French Special Forces*, 37-49; Sjoberg, *The Evolution of the French Special Forces*, 24-5.

<sup>242</sup> Micheletti, *French Special Forces*, 152; Sjoberg, *The Evolution of the French Special Forces*, 25; “France’s Amphibious and Special Forces,” *IHS Jane’s*.

<sup>243</sup> *ALAT* stands for *Aviation Legere de l’Armee de Terre* – French Army Light Aviation.

combat fire support. The 1<sup>st</sup> EOS flies Pumas and Cougars, while the 2<sup>nd</sup> EOS uses Gazelles and newly added Tiger helicopters.<sup>244</sup>

(3) Special Air Operations: Apparently, unlike the Army and Navy, there is no centralized organization in the French Air Force that acts as an interface between COS and the Air Staff. There does seem to be a partially centralized organization in *CFCA* (Special Airborne Infantry Command)<sup>245</sup> that oversees Air Force-related commando operations, which may help fill this gap. The *CFCA* is composed of the Air Force Commando Unit 10 (*CPA 10*) and the special operations helicopter squadrons (*EHS*). The other Air Force units dedicated to support COS are *DOS/C-160* and *DOS/C-130*. Also of note is that, as with Navy SOF, these units do not only support COS, but also the larger French Air Force. The detailed tasks of these action and support units are:

- *Commando Parachutiste de l'air No. 10 (CPA 10)*: The core missions of this unit encompass laser target designation and ranging, reconnoitering and securing landing zones, and restoration of airport facilities. These capabilities are unique to this unit.<sup>246</sup>
- *Escadrille des Helicopteres Speciaux (EHS)*: This unit was re-organized in 2000, to include being moved to Cazaux to ensure better support to COS units. In Cazaux, *EHS* is physically closer to the SOF action units it is designed to support, especially the naval commandos. The squadrons fly mainly Super Pumas and Fennec helicopters. However, its Super Pumas are different from those flown by *DAOS*,

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<sup>244</sup> Micheletti, *French Special Forces*, 117-20; Sjoberg, *The Evolution of the French Special Forces*, 25-6; “France’s Amphibious and Special Forces,” *IHS Jane’s*.

<sup>245</sup> *CFCA* stands for *Commandement des fusiliers de l'air*.

<sup>246</sup> Micheletti, *French Special Forces*, 87-111; Sjoberg, *The Evolution of the French Special Forces*, 27-8. Although this unit also possesses some other enabling capabilities that are common with the other SOF units, for example sniping and military free-fall, these capabilities again aim to ensure flexibility and independence.

and are better suited for the maritime environment.<sup>247</sup> Consequently, COS designated *EHS* to be the “naval operations oriented unit.” This maritime orientation sets the *EHS* apart from the *DAOS*.<sup>248</sup>

- *Division des Operations Speciales* (DOS) Transport: This division consists of two arms—DOS/C-160 and DOS/C-130. As the names imply, the former flies the C-160R *Transall* and the latter the C-130 *Hercules*. Like the *EOS* and *EHS* pilots and aircrew, personnel assigned to DOS are carefully selected. In fact, DOS pilots and aircrew are normally among the most experienced because of the demanding tasks they have to perform for COS (e.g., night flying and working behind enemy lines). Most are instructors at the training center concurrently. In addition to supporting COS, they also support the Forward Air Command (CFAP). Another interesting point about DOS is that it does not have organic aircraft, but only pilots and crew.<sup>249</sup>

From the above descriptions, it is clear that most COS units have access to the strategic level for both operational and administrative matters.<sup>250</sup> This is crucial for strategic assets like SOF. However, it is still worth posing the

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<sup>247</sup> The Super Pumas are fitted with the French designed *Coupleur de Vol Stationnaire* (CVS, hover coupler system). This allows the Pumas to maintain a balanced hover even in bad visibility conditions.

<sup>248</sup> Micheletti, *French Special Forces*, 128–147; Sjoberg, *The Evolution of the French Special Forces*, 28; “France’s Amphibious and Special Forces,” *IHS Jane’s*.

<sup>249</sup> Micheletti, *French Special Forces*, 128–35; Sjoberg, *The Evolution of the French Special Forces*, 28–9. While the two DOS detachments do not have organic air assets, the French Air Force ensures that they have ready access to at least one aircraft everyday for either training or operations.

<sup>250</sup> Only the units in the Air Force seem not to have such access when under administrative control.

question “has COS facilitated or ensured better employment and development of SOF to meet France’s national objectives?” To answer, I will cite a few examples:

(1) Harmonize, Integrate and Unify SOF capabilities. To harmonize and integrate different SOF units requires clear doctrine about SOF’s employment and development. It took COS many years of working with the services to put in place such a coherent doctrine. Once COS overcame this initial hurdle, as well as the services’ parochialism, the foundation for an effective French SOF system began to come together. In addition to doctrinal issues, like the development of a concept of operations and common procedures, as well as equipment and training directives,<sup>251</sup> other processes carried out by the HQ are equally vital to ensuring interoperability and integration. This is the responsibility of the six bureaus; their job is to put processes in place, and then glue them together so that COS has a system that functions as a coherent whole. Here, I will use the work done by the Training and R&D Bureaus as cases in point.

To ensure interoperability and integration between France’s SOF units, the Training Bureau organizes and conducts combined exercises and training. It also coordinates joint exercises and training with other French agencies or allied SOF units. In some of these exercises, COS will participate to exercise the C2 structure and linkages.<sup>252</sup> In addition to exercises and combined

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<sup>251</sup> Micheletti, *French Special Forces*, 32. This is the job of the R&D Bureau.

<sup>252</sup> Ibid., 12–3, 32; Sjoberg, *The Evolution of the French Special Forces*, 31. There are at least two combined exercises every year. They are mostly conducted at night, including the flying missions. Some examples of joint exercises are *EXCOM 2002* when CPA 10 exercised with the Gendarmes, national police, and other civilian agencies; and the allied exercise, *Strong Resolve*, conducted in 2002 when COS acted as the CJSOTF. Another was the CT training between Hubert, GCMC, and GIGN as mentioned earlier that helped to standardize CT procedures between these three units.

training, the Training Bureau sets up common basic SOF training in areas like parachuting, Commando Training, and Diving Training.<sup>253</sup>

To ensure commonality of equipment and to ensure that the services can adequately support SO, the R&D Bureau works closely with the individual services since “the major acquisition programs are organic” to the latter. COS does not have a separate budget to fund most of these acquisition programs, but, ever since COS’s acceptance by the services as a partner, this process seems to have gone smoothly. Consequently, the interoperability issue pertaining to equipment, which was a major issue during and before the Gulf War, is now no longer a problem. One proof of this can be found in the French *FTM* vehicle. This is a lightweight vehicle designed by the French Air Force specifically to support helicopter refueling in out-of-area operations. The invention of this vehicle has helped French SOF significantly, since rotary aircraft are an important part of SO.<sup>254</sup>

Clear doctrine, especially in regard to the employment of SOF, also helps to unify units. And, here is where French SOF differs from our two earlier cases. COS has been able to implement an unequivocal and relevant division of labor among the different SOF units under its command. This does not just apply to tasks and niche areas. COS also works with other government agencies to unambiguously demarcate each “territory” (see Figure 7).

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253 Sjoberg, *The Evolution of the French Special Forces*, 30-1; Micheletti, *French Special Forces*, 47, 87. This common training is normally conducted at centralized institutions. For example, airborne training is conducted at Airborne School in Pau, and Commando training is conducted at National Commando Training Centers. Further, to qualify for CPA 10, one must first go through the airborne training and the Commando Level II training conducted at these centers. Also, the 1<sup>st</sup> RPIMa sends its troopers to the Navy Diving School for dive training. Of course, besides harmonizing the units, this helps maximize/save resources.

254 Micheletti, *French Special Forces*, 13, 32, 130-1. According to Micheletti, this is why most COS officers will say, “We’ve come a long way since 1992!”

Consequently, COS units are able to work cooperatively and in harmony among themselves and also with other special units outside of COS that closely support them, such as *DRM* and *Gendarmes* units.<sup>255</sup>

(2) Effective Stewardship of SOF. This refers to what Chapter II describes as *deviation-amplifying feedback*. Is COS able to keep French SOF relevant and effective as a strategic instrument? Here, three examples suggest that COS is able to effectively orientate French SOF to meet the national objectives without over-committing them.

In the 1990s, the idea of civil-military activities was still very new and just starting to take hold in the French military. Consequently, COS was tasked to be the “*Laboratory*” for this capability, and it managed to build up a credible unit, *Section d’Influence* (Section for Influence), to perform this role.<sup>256</sup> During the late nineties there was a growing demand for influence operations given the new security environment. From COS’s perspective, this was not SOF’s main focus. Therefore, instead of expanding SOF to support this demand, or shifting units away from COS’s core foci, COS gave up this role to the Army, maintaining only a small capability to meet SO requirements.<sup>257</sup>

A second example of effective stewardship concerns reform of Navy SOF in 2001. Under the previous system, there was very little specialization or modularity. The impetus behind reforming Navy SOF was two-

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<sup>255</sup> Micheletti, *French Special Forces*, 16-23; Sjoberg, *The Evolution of the French Special Forces*, 44-8. The examples to support this claim can be found in operations from the 1990s through today in Afghanistan. What these examples indicate is that COS has a knack for utilizing a force package concept that picks and chooses SOF from the different units to make up the force to be deployed.

<sup>256</sup> Eliot A. Cohen, *Commandos and Politicians: Elite Military Units in Modern Democracies* (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1978), 31-2. According to Eliot Cohen, “Elite units are often defended as military laboratories for new tactical systems. Such units ... can try out new doctrines, test their validity, and then spread the doctrines to the rest of the army.”

<sup>257</sup> Sjoberg, *The Evolution of the French Special Forces*, 20-1. The Army set up a Civil Military Center in the late nineties to fulfill this demand. In the end, COS only kept a small force in the *EIT* (*Expertise Initiale du Theatre* – Initial Expertise in the Theatre) for its own needs.

fold: one, to make the Navy SOF more effective and deployable;<sup>258</sup> two, to align it with the overall direction of the French Armed Forces, toward greater modularity and mobility. In the end, it also gave COS more flexibility as COS could now pick and choose the relevant forces to make up force packages for deployment.

Finally, we have the example of 13 RDP being absorbed into COS in July 2002. Army SOF was expanded to include 13 RDP to allow a more seamless integration between SO and tactical/operational intelligence. Even when 13 RDP was with the *DRM*, it was already supporting many of the COS's operations. Hence, it can only have helped make COS more effective to add 13 RDP.<sup>259</sup>

(3) Capabilities/Technology Development. Another key aspect of ensuring better employment of SOF is to make sure that SOF have access to all the equipment and assets they need to fulfill their tasks. As mentioned, this job falls under the purview of the R&D Bureau. Beyond the earlier example of the *FMT* vehicle, another important step was the addition of new helicopters to COS's inventory. This came in the wake of the French SOF experience in Afghanistan in 2001 when it was deployed as part of the international force (ISAF). The French lacked helicopters to support tactical transportation of SOF units in out-of-area operations. As a consequence, and most likely with COS's influence, the French government agreed to acquire 14 new helicopters at the price of EUR 460 million to support SOF. In addition,

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<sup>258</sup> To underline the earlier point on a clear division of labor, one can also argue that this made the roles and responsibilities clearer between the different navy units.

<sup>259</sup> Sjoberg, *The Evolution of the French Special Forces*, 25, 27, 41–2.

purchases were made of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV) and patrol vehicles, which specifically met SOF requirements.<sup>260</sup>

### ***b. Human Capital and Culture***

As we saw with the previous case studies, *Human Capital* and *Culture* are often closely intertwined with *Structure* and *Tasks*. It is no different in this case. However, rather than recapitulate some of the key points made earlier, here I offer two new observations about expansion of career options for SOF, and power sharing between COS and the services.

A critical underlying factor for COS's effectiveness appears to lie in its ability to fill its HQ with a sufficient number and a good distribution of SOF members from the different services. Since the HQ is the core of the COS organization, an inherently joint environment enables it to effectively support all the demands from the various tactical units adequately. Further, the joint environment also ensures that every SOF issue is looked at from the point of view of all three services, to include potential second and third order effects of proposed courses of action. Second, the strict selection system the COS has for its CT groups underscores the seriousness it places on CT missions. This is starkly different from the Israeli case. In the French case, CT troopers not only need to have seniority in time of service, but also in chronological age (and by extension, maturity). Lastly, the establishment of COS bodes well for the career system of the SOF community, particularly for officers. This turns out to be especially helpful for Navy and Air Force SOF because, as is often the case in

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<sup>260</sup> Robert Wall, "Special Delivery; French special operations helicopter force grows," *Aviation Week & Space Technology*, April 9, 2007, <http://www.lexisnexis.com.libproxy.nps.edu/lncui2api/results/docview> (accessed January 30, 2011); Gareth Jennings, "French Special Forces Choose Skylark," *Jane's Defence Weekly*, April 2, 2008, <http://www.lexisnexis.com.libproxy.nps.edu/lncui2api/results/docview> (accessed January 30, 2011); J A C Lewis, "France buys 10 EC 725s to bolster special forces," *Jane's Defence Weekly*, December 11, 2002, <http://search.janes.com.libproxy.nps.edu/Search/documentView.do?docId> (accessed January 30, 2011); "France receives first Special Patrol Vehicles," *International Defence Review*, July 1, 2006, <http://search.janes.com.libproxy.nps.edu/Search/documentView.do?docId> (accessed January 30, 2011).

smaller militaries, they have more limited opportunities.<sup>261</sup> With COS, their career options are not only expanded, but they can stay within their field of SO. This also opens an additional position for officers within the SOF system to aspire to be COS Commander.<sup>262</sup>

As for Culture, it is clear that French SOF get along internally, as well as with supporting agencies inside and outside of the military. What might account for this? First, doctrine is unambiguous about the employment and development of SOF, to include a clear division of labor. Second, troops go through common basic training, which has a harmonizing effect. Such training helps build bonds and trust among soldiers from different units, which then facilitates further exchanges and interactions as these soldiers subsequently embark on their SOF careers. Third, is the inherent joint culture in the French Armed Forces.

Notwithstanding all the positive things said about French SOF, there remains at least one potential downside to its set up: namely, the arrangement by which COS is supposed to share power with the conventional services over *their* SOF. Although there have been no reports to suggest that this relationship is problematic, it is one area where things potentially could go awry. Perhaps the liaison officers help COS keep the relationship with the key supporting agencies even-keeled. But to maintain balance via such informal

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<sup>261</sup> Katz, *Israeli Special Forces*, 59, 63. A case in point is the Israeli Navy SOF. Officers are forced into a career in the Israeli Navy since Flotilla 13 is too small to hold them all, especially as they reach a more senior level. The other reason to emphasize the Navy and Air Force is because the nature of their work is very different from SOF. As was noted in Chapter III, the conventional Army normally has more in common with its SOF as compared to either the Navy or the Air Force (in this case, the CPA 10).

<sup>262</sup> Micheletti, *French Special Forces*, 10. The second commander of COS, Major General Jacques Saleun, was formerly a pilot who supported SO missions when he was in the Air Force. His appointment proves that the French system recognizes the expertise one needs to have to be a COS commander. It also means that officers from all three services stand an equal chance of being appointed.

relations certainly takes time and effort.<sup>263</sup> For a Component Command structure like COS, this then becomes, and remains, one of its key tasks.

### 3. Connecting the Dots

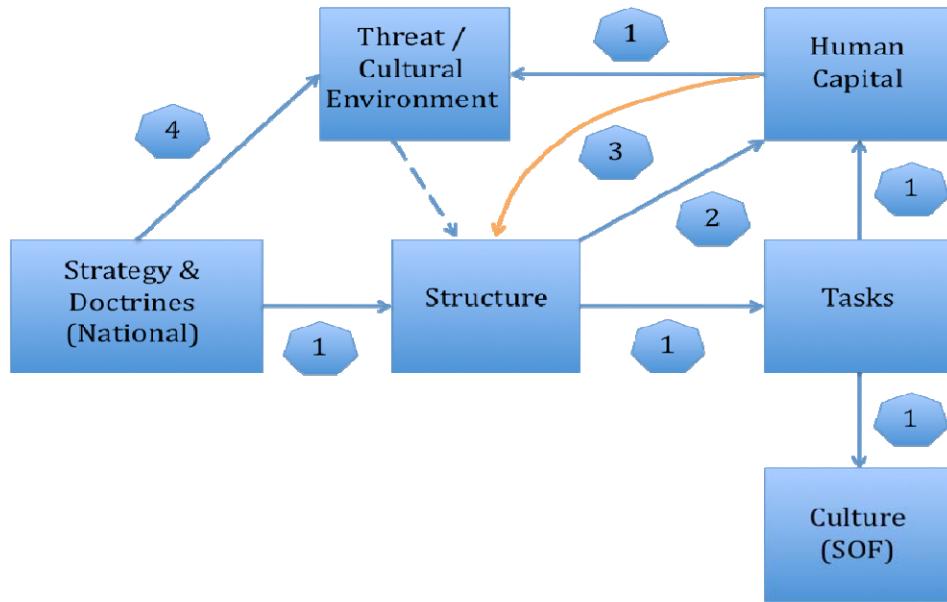


Figure 10. Pathological Analysis of French SOF

From the evidence presented, it is clear that the credit for this well-functioning system lies with having a clear national strategy. This includes the decision to set up COS to oversee SO performed by the three services. The most important aspect of the doctrine COS itself has implemented has guaranteed an unequivocal division of labor between the different SOF units, as well as between COS and other agencies. This clear task differentiation has granted the tactical units the ability to focus their energies in the right areas (e.g., they have been able to develop the right human capabilities). The division of labor overseen by COS has also helped ensure good relations among the different units, which

<sup>263</sup> Sjoberg, *The Evolution of the French Special Forces*, 27, 39. COS's earlier experiences before it gained traction with the conventional forces reinforce the potential weak point this type of matrix structure possesses. But, for COS, this factor was alleviated by the favorable joint environment of the French Armed Forces.

bodes well for the SOF community as a whole. However, a clear SOF doctrine is only one dimension of COS's tasks. Others involve R&D, training, and operational support. COS's overall effectiveness at executing its tasks (via the six Bureaus) has resulted in SOF units that are well oriented to the threat environment for which they were built. For simplicity's sake, all of these are represented by Trail 1 in Figure 10.

Trails 2 and 3 depict the interactions between the *Structure* and *Human Capital*. Trail 2—*Structure to Human Capital*—refers to the career expansion option that COS offers to the whole SOF community, albeit more for Navy and Air Force assets. Trail 3—*Human Capital to Structure*—reflects the capacity and distribution of human capital in the HQ that makes the latter an effective entity. It is important to emphasize this feedback loop because it shows the interconnection between the product and the system itself. As the HQ draws its human capital from the tactical units (which is the product produced by the system), the effectiveness of the HQ is thus also a function of how well it does its job in producing the product. To this end, French SOF seem to have gotten it right.<sup>264</sup>

Finally, Trail 4 illustrates the alignment between the national strategy and the threat environment.<sup>265</sup>

#### 4. Generating Insights

When COS was initially established in 1992, the French SOF system did not hit the road and run immediately. It took the macro-organization several years to fight the bureaucratic inertia of the conventional military before it could do what it was designed for. The turning point came after the release of the 1994 White Paper, or, more precisely, during the implementation of *MPL 97-02*, whose

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<sup>264</sup> This is what the evidence has revealed from reading about the French SOF. However, like in all things, reality may be a bit messier – something that only further investigation could help to determine.

<sup>265</sup> This alignment (with the social environment) also speaks for the French Armed Forces in regard to the removal of the draft system.

strategic initiatives re-oriented the entire French Armed Forces toward a joint concept. This re-orientation, coupled with COS's own efforts in vying for the services' buy-in, finally resulted in COS being able to overcome initial resistance, and subsequently allowed COS to put the key pieces of the French SOF system into place. Once this happened, the only direction in which the system could head was toward the positive. Today, at least a decade since things came together, the SOF system, which is driven by COS, is one that is effective and aligned with France's national objectives. To say the least, this French case seems to provide many answers to the organizational conundrums raised by the previous two case studies. Key insights from the French experience follow:

- a. The French case illustrates that changing the organizational structure of SOF alone is not a foolproof way to resolve all the organizational issues at the system level. What needs to accompany this change is to have a clear national strategy for SOF, as well as other doctrinal guidance that will help the new organization and others accept its role. Further, the SOF organization has to be given sufficient and appropriate power in strategy and doctrine (over and above what is implicit in the construct) to enable it to be effective. This is because the nature of this overarching SOF organization requires it to share power with the conventional services. When provided with the proper authority, it can better focus its efforts on more important tasks, such as capability development, rather than wasting time and energy on maintaining an informal relationship with the conventional services. Further, to lessen the weight put on this informal relationship, the organization should also be given a separate budget so that it can pursue SOF-specific equipment and address SOF-specific requirements as it deems fit. Time and again the French case reveals the importance of such a budget.

- b. The French case reinforces how important it is to have a clear division of labor. More importantly, it underscores that developing a doctrine detailing this should be the first thing any new SOF superstructure does. This is because doctrine forms the base document from which all other equally important processes and directives take reference.
- c. The French case also helps reiterate a point made earlier in regard to Israeli SOF, which is that when there are many SOF units in the SOF system, an oversight agency is imperative. More importantly, the French example offers insights into how such an agency (i.e., Component Command) should be designed. These insights concern issues such as what type of subunits the HQ should have (e.g., the six Bureaus), their roles and responsibilities, the size and distribution of manpower, and the kind of linkages the HQ needs to have with other agencies (e.g., a joint environment, particularly with similar units like Gendarmes and Intelligence).<sup>266</sup> This case also makes clear how important it is for SOF to have dedicated air crew and assets; since supporting SO can be very (or, read: extremely) different from supporting conventional operations, the airmen need to know intimately both the operations and the troopers.
- d. For small and medium militaries where manpower is a key constraint, the Component Command can provide a very efficient solution. In the French case, the size of the HQ is only about 60 personnel, but it is able to effectively support a total SOF community of close to 3,000 members. Critical, too, is a favorable environment in which the services willingly fulfill their raise-train-sustain functions. The existence of a Component Command can

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<sup>266</sup> Comparing the Israeli with the French case, one possible explanation for Israel's inability to act on its SOF's ineffectiveness is its challenging security environment – it is always busy reacting and has no time to think strategically.

also help to provide additional career options for SOF. This bodes well not only for individuals, but also for the whole system as SOF can retain highly experienced personnel.

- e. For a Component Command, a pro-joint environment may be especially important. Particularly since the organization does not hold actual assets but depends on the conventional services for support. Even when a favorable joint environment exists, the organization still needs to ensure that it has tight and appropriate linkages with its supporting intelligence agencies, whether within the military or at the national level.<sup>267</sup> The premise here is that the SOF system is dependent to some degree on external intelligence support. To this end, the SOF organization needs to also make sure that the division of labor between it and the intelligence agencies is clearly delineated (the same, actually, goes for all agencies that perform similar functions).<sup>268</sup>
- f. As strategic instruments, the Component Command and the tactical units should have access to the top leadership of the military and the services, respectively. This pertains not only to operational, but also administrative matters. To this end, the geographical location of the Command vis-à-vis its “master” can be an important factor.<sup>269</sup> This is because the Command needs to work closely with the top leadership, especially in operations, and be able to influence or turn around decisions fast enough to be effective.
- g. The geographical location of the Component Command (HQ) vis-à-vis its tactical units may not be quite as critical since one thing the

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<sup>267</sup> This emphasis on intelligence is because it is a critical part of SO. Further, depending on the SOF missions and how well the external intelligence agencies can support SOF requirements, it may be necessary for SOF to have organic HUMINT capabilities. In general, having such capabilities as part of the SOF organization will most likely be more boon than bane.

<sup>268</sup> In general, SOF, intelligence, and special police agencies often have some overlapping functions.

<sup>269</sup> This seems to be what this case suggests, especially for COS versus CEMA. COS is just north of Paris where CEMA is located.

French case suggests is that even when COS is not in close proximity to its units, the French system continues to be effective. I would argue that the reason this is so is that the French system is, to a large extent, underpinned by a well-staffed and well-designed HQ. If the converse is true, geographical proximity may well become a critical consideration.

- h. As with Norwegian SOF, all the personnel in the French SOF system are volunteers. This may again indicate the importance of using only volunteers for SO, especially for CT operations.<sup>270</sup> For the latter, SOF should only select the most experienced and mature troopers.
- i. Another way to maximize, or save, resources is to have common basic SOF courses (e.g., Commando and Airborne courses in this case), in addition to common processes in the HQ, such as with R&D. These common basic courses help to make interoperability possible. On this note, SOF leadership should also think about having a common selection process and basic SOF training. These common selection and basic SOF training processes should encompass identifying the strengths of the different candidates early, which can then help “stream” candidates into more specialized training related to the tactical units’ niche areas. There are at least two benefits to having such common processes. First, common selection and training will help match a man’s aptitude and competencies to the task requirements early, and hence reduce the costs of attrition later on. Second, common selection and training helps to build a common SOF identity which also eases interoperability.<sup>271</sup>

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<sup>270</sup> If we think in terms of the risk and operational security aspects of the job, it becomes even clearer that doing the opposite is a nonstarter.

<sup>271</sup> Certainly a lot more is involved if an organization chooses to have such common processes. But this is beyond the scope of this thesis.

## C. AUSTRALIA

In this final case study, we are going to look at Australian SOF and its macro-organization, known as the Special Operations Command (SOCOMD). For the purposes of this thesis, I will consider SOCOMD to be a Service Command as it has all the characteristics that a service-like structure possesses:

This model [Service Command] provides SOF senior leadership the authority, control, and resources necessary to optimize national SOF capabilities within the defence establishment. However, this model also diverts the attention of the SOF senior leadership from joint operational matters to service force management . . . and force development . . . matters.<sup>272</sup>

As per the description, SOCOMD is able to provide coherent stewardship for Australian SOF and, comparatively speaking, does so in a much more effective fashion than COS for the French. The reasons are three-fold: (1) the full command authority that comes with the Service-like organization, (2) the implementation of clear doctrine from the outset, and (3) its reach to and influence on the strategic leadership. Consequently, while SOCOMD has spent the better part of its existence as a “work in progress,” it fulfills what it was designed to do.<sup>273</sup>

### 1. Australia’s Environment and National Strategy

Like its western allies, Australia’s strategic environment underwent significant changes in the past two decades. The harbingers of these changes were two watershed events—the end of the Cold War and the September 11 attacks on the United States. While the end of the Cold War heralded a huge

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<sup>272</sup> NSCC, *NATO SOF Study*, 27.

<sup>273</sup> Christopher Wayne Gillies, *The Cutting Edge: Origins, Implementation, and Lessons Learned from the Creation of Australia’s Special Operations Command – With Recommendations for Canadian Special Operations Forces Command* (Monterey, CA: Naval Postgraduate School, December 2006), 21; Micheletti, *French Special Forces*, 12. While SOCOMD was officially established in May 2003, it reached its maturity only in 2008. Further, according to Micheletti, it took USSOCOM ten years to establish itself, while Britain’s macro-organization for SOF took almost fifty years to secure its place in the UK defense system.

(positive) change in the conventional threat environment for Australia's allies,<sup>274</sup> it was the 9/11 attacks and the subsequent wave of Islamic terrorism that affected Australia the most. As Michael Evans writes:

Between 1999 and 2003, Australia entered the new age of globalised security, in which it became apparent that ... the spread of radical Islamism into South-East Asia, symbolized by the Bali and Jakarta bombing attacks, has confronted Australia with a long-term regional security problem ... linked to a global jihadist movement.<sup>275</sup>

While this Islamic terrorism threat was not new prior to the 9/11 incident, it was not a huge concern for Australia's authorities because Australia and its people were never a direct target. Things began to change with the 9/11 attacks, and more so with the Bali Bombing on 12 Oct 2002. The latter marked the first time Australians' lives had been claimed directly by terrorist acts.<sup>276</sup> In its wake,

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<sup>274</sup> Michael Evans, *The Tyranny of Dissonance: Australia's Strategic Culture and Way of War 1901-2005* (Duntroon, Australia: Land Warfare Studies Centre, February 2005), 63; Hugh White, "Australia's Strategic Weight and Role in the Asia," *Proceedings of the ASPI International Conference: Global Forces 2010*, [http://www.aspi.org.au/publications/publication\\_details.aspx?ContentID=288&pubtype=13](http://www.aspi.org.au/publications/publication_details.aspx?ContentID=288&pubtype=13) (accessed April 10, 2011), 28. The conventional threat countenanced by Australia has always been low even during the Cold War period. According to Michael Evans, the 1970s and 1980s were a period of relative stability for Australia. This is because Australia's physical geography confers on it the benefits of insularity. For Australia, the more significant effects from the end of the Cold War were those associated with globalization, which in some ways also contributed to the rise of non-conventional threats.

<sup>275</sup> Evans, *The Tyranny of Dissonance*, 95.

<sup>276</sup> Australian Government, *Counter-Terrorism White Paper 2010: Securing Australia, Protecting Our Community*, [http://www.dpmc.gov.au/publications/counter\\_terrorism](http://www.dpmc.gov.au/publications/counter_terrorism) (accessed April 10, 2011), 7. As stated in the white paper, "Terrorism affected Australia before the 11 September 2001 attacks ... Various overseas terrorist groups have long had a presence in Australia – focused largely on fundraising and procurement, occasionally escalating to violence. But prior to the rise of self-styled jihadist terrorism fostered by al-Qa'ida, Australia itself was not a specific target. We now are."

the Australian government took a slew of counter-measures. Pertinent to SOF, one of these involved the expansion of SOF capabilities that culminated in the establishment of SOCOMD in May 2003.<sup>277</sup>

Beyond the expansion of SOF capabilities, the government also undertook, in a progressive fashion, a series of other system-level initiatives. To address the threat of terrorism the government adopted a so-called “whole of government approach.” Other examples of these initiatives include the establishment of the National Counter-Terrorism Committee (NCTC) and the new National Counter-Terrorism Plan in 2002, and, in more recent times, the creation of the National Intelligence Coordination Committee (NICC, 2009) and Counter Terrorism Control Centre (CTCC, 2010).<sup>278</sup> Further, periodic national-level policies helped ensure that these national entities/agencies work hand in glove with one another. More recently, there have been the 2009 Defense White Paper and 2010 Counter Terrorism White Paper.<sup>279</sup> Pertaining to Australian SOF, it is worth noting that Commander SOCOMD (SOCAUST) is part of the NCTC, which is the national-level coordinating body for CT that also provides policy advice to the government.<sup>280</sup> Equally noteworthy is the fact that the first SOCAUST, Major General (retd) Duncan Lewis, was appointed the “First

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<sup>277</sup> Malcolm Brailey, *The Transformation of Special Operations Forces in Contemporary Conflict: Strategy, Missions, Organisation and Tactics* (Duntroon, Australia: Land Warfare Studies Centre, November 2005), 35; Major General Duncan Lewis, “Guarding Australians Against Terrorism,” *Australian Army Journal*, vol. 1, no. 2 (2003): 45–52. In May 2002, the Australian government announced the creation of a second Tactical Assault Group (TAG). It would cost the government A\$219.4 million, and was meant to strengthen the overall CT capabilities of the ADF. The TAG members were drawn from the Australian SAS.

<sup>278</sup> *Counter-Terrorism White Paper 2010*, 27–8; Gillies, *The Cutting Edge*, 51. According to Gillies, the main roles of NCTC include: “provision of strategic policy advice to heads of government and ministers, coordination of national counter-terrorism capability, and maintaining an effective flow of intelligence and information across jurisdictions.” Also, its members are leaders of “states and territories at senior policy level, including deputy police commissioners.” For NICC and CTCC, they mainly coordinate intelligence at the national level. The NICC is more of a strategic advisory body for making policies, while the CTCC is an operational agency doing the actual coordination. See the White Paper for more details on their roles and responsibilities.

<sup>279</sup> The last CT white paper was before the Bali Bombing, and the last defense white paper was in 2000. In between, there were some update papers.

<sup>280</sup> Gillies, *The Cutting Edge*, 51. The SOCAUST’s role in NCTC is officially captured in the “Inter-Governmental Agreement on Australia’s National Counter-Terrorism Arrangements” on 24 October 2002.

Assistant Secretary for National Security in the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet in 2004, and as Deputy Secretary in the same department in August 2005.” Besides SOCAUST, a number of former Australian Special Air Service (SAS) personnel were also recruited by NCTC to work between the government and SOF.<sup>281</sup>

Taken together, the two most recent white papers underscore three key points salient to this thesis. First, they reveal the government’s perception of the terrorism threat, which is that it “has become a persistent and permanent feature of Australia’s security environment.”<sup>282</sup> Second, they render the traditional concept of security invalid. Australia deems that it is no longer possible to delineate between external and internal, or national and societal threats. This is because instability in Southeast Asia (specifically Indonesia) and Afghanistan can equally affect the security and interests of Australia and its people. As such, the white papers advocate Australia’s participation in both regional and international operations. The papers recognize these operations as necessary for a secure and stable world order.<sup>283</sup> As noted by Hugh Collins, the world order is one with which Australia’s fate is closely intertwined:

[Australia’s] future and its fate lie on the complex networks of global interdependence. The conditions of world order are the immediate conditions of Australian security and prosperity. This gives the country a high stake in defining these international conditions, but also means that changes in international norms and transnational regimes will have direct impact upon domestic politics.<sup>284</sup>

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<sup>281</sup> Brailey, *The Transformation of Special Operations Forces in Contemporary Conflict*, 16–7.

<sup>282</sup> *Counter-Terrorism White Paper 2010*, 7. It is important to highlight that the terrorism threat is subsumed under the broader unconventional threats (such as failed states and energy resource crisis) in both white papers. However, it still stands out amongst these other threats.

<sup>283</sup> Ibid., 21; Australian Government, *Defending Australia in the Asia Pacific Century: Force 2030*, [http://www.defence.gov.au/whitepaper/docs/defence\\_white\\_paper\\_2009.pdf](http://www.defence.gov.au/whitepaper/docs/defence_white_paper_2009.pdf) (accessed April 10, 2011), 20–3.

<sup>284</sup> Hugh Collins, “Political Ideology in Australia: The Distinctiveness of a Benthamite Society,” in Australia: The *Daedalus Symposium*, ed. Stephen R. Graubard (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1985), 162.

Third, the papers establish a clear division of labor between the different national agencies so that no conflict of interests will impede the government from bringing to bear all these assets. Specifically, in the 2009 white paper, SOF's role is clearly discernible when it comes to the fight against terrorism, in both domestic and offshore/overseas operations.

Apart from unconventional threats, the 2009 Defense White Paper also emphasizes maintaining Australia's alliance with the U.S. For Australia, this alliance has been and continues to be an important feature of its national security.<sup>285</sup> To this end, the Coalition/U.S-led operations in which the Australian Defense Force (ADF) participates, serve not only *Protection/Prevention* functions (per French parlance), but also fulfill Australia's alliance commitments (not unlike Norway vis-à-vis NATO). As with its role in the fight against terrorism, SOF also serve as a national policy instrument. Invariably, being small, mobile, flexible, but capable of making an impact lends SOF value in the eyes of policy makers. This is exemplified in the many recent instances when SOF's involvement in coalition operations has been featured prominently. Examples include SAS

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<sup>285</sup> *Defending Australia in the Asia Pacific Century*, 93-4; Nick Bisley, "Australia's strategic relationships in the 21st century," and Mark Thomson, "What sort of defence force does Australia need?" *Proceedings of the ASPI International Conference: Global Forces 2010*, [http://www.aspi.org.au/publications/publication\\_details.aspx?ContentID=288&pubtype=13](http://www.aspi.org.au/publications/publication_details.aspx?ContentID=288&pubtype=13) (accessed April 10, 2011), 25-52. Recently, critics are concerned with the changing global and regional dynamics caused by the rise of China. Because of this, they question Australia's long-standing reliance on its alliance with the U.S., and in broader terms, the whole approach to defense force restructuring. Nevertheless, it is sufficient for this thesis simply to recognize that this relationship is still a key part of Australia's defense strategy.

participation in Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom and, more recently, the 2005 Special Operations Task Group deployment to Afghanistan.<sup>286</sup>

From the anecdotal evidence presented in this segment, it is clear that SOF are well regarded and valued by the political-military leadership. According to David Horner, “the government and the Chief of the Defence Force would be unlikely to authorise (sic) special forces operations unless they had confidence in the ability of the special forces and the maturity of its commanders.”<sup>287</sup> Notwithstanding this favorable relationship, the strategic direction for SOF has not always been so clear. As Evans contended in February 2005:

...there has been, and continues to be, a ‘tyranny of dissonance’ between Australian strategic theory and its warfighting practice. While peacetime Australian strategic theory has frequently upheld the defence of geography as a foundation stone of defence policy, strategic activity in wartime and security crisis has usually been undertaken to uphold Australia’s liberal democratic values and vital political interests.<sup>288</sup>

The point to be highlighted here is that, even without clear strategic guidance in previous decades, Australian SOF were nonetheless able to remain relevant as a

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<sup>286</sup> Hugh McManners, *Ultimate Special Forces* (London: Dorling Kindersley, 2008) 64–7; Greg Sheridan, “Special Forces Take the Brunt,” *Weekend Australian*, August 2, 2008, <http://infoweb.newsbank.com.libproxy.nps.edu/iw-search> (accessed April 10, 2011); Ian Bostock, “MAJ GEN Duncan Lewis: Special Operations Commander Australia,” *Jane’s Defence Weekly*, May 28, 2003, <http://search.janes.com.libproxy.nps.edu/Search/documentView.do?docId> (accessed April 10, 2011). According to Greg Sheridan, “It seemed that while the regular army was often sent to hazardous tasks, such as that in East Timor, successive governments felt confident in deploying only the SAS in high-intensity conflict. The same was true in Afghanistan, where the SAS covered itself in glory in Operation Anaconda in 2003, among other engagements. Further, in Ian Bostock’s report, “The type of military capabilities requested of Australia by Washington were in the area of special ground reconnaissance. ‘US forces can do these sorts of tasks, but not at the ranges we [the SASR] can ... That’s the kind of thing our guys really do excel at.’”

<sup>287</sup> David Horner, SAS: *Phantoms of the Jungle* (Nashville: The Battery Press, 1989), 458.

<sup>288</sup> Evans, *The Tyranny of Dissonance*, ix. What this means is that while the government advocated “continental defense” (guarding of the maritime and air approaches for Australia’s homeland defense), it kept deploying the ADF (particularly SOF) on overseas operations that had nothing to do with that strategy. Further, it also seems that the government has accepted some of Evans’ points. Particularly, he argued for the “whole of government approach” in his paper and now this has become the new buzzword in the Australian system.

national policy instrument. Arguably, this is because Australian SOF have long had an oversight authority orchestrating and synchronizing SO, even before the establishment of SOCOMD. As we see next, a semblance of SOCOMD (more like a Component Command) was already in existence as early as 1997.<sup>289</sup>

## 2. SOCOMD and Australian SOF

### a. ***SOCOMD (Structure, Tasks, Human and Culture) and Brief History***

The first iteration of a macro-structure overseeing SO was stood up in 1979, and was known as the Directorate Special Action Forces (DSAF). As Australian SOF grew, DSAF expanded, first to become Headquarter Special Forces (HQSF) in 1990, and later Headquarter Special Operations (HQSO) in 1997.<sup>290</sup> By 1997, HQSO already had Service-like responsibilities. It had command over tactical SOF and other assigned units, was required to fulfill SOF's raise-train-sustain functions and, finally, was responsible for overseeing the overall employment and development of SOF capabilities. At the time, HQSO was commanded by a brigadier general and had a staff of 42. Important to note is that Australian SOF in this period was comprised mainly of Army SOF units and was relatively small.<sup>291</sup>

Following the Bali bombing in 2002, the government decided to establish SOCOMD. On 5 May 2003, SOCOMD officially came into being. Unlike

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<sup>289</sup> One way to make this apparent is to engage in a small thought exercise. Imagine if there was no oversight agency (or the agency had no authority, such as in Israel and Norway). What would likely have happened is that all the SOF units would have shifted their efforts to CT, just as in Israel. Bearing in mind that the terrorism threat was picking up at this time and the government was advocating homeland defense, the government then would have had no SOF specialized in traditional SOF capabilities that it could deploy to assist in the US-led operations in the early 2000s.

<sup>290</sup> DSAF and HQSF are more like the NMSE structure.

<sup>291</sup> Gillies, *The Cutting Edge*, 20-22; Katz, *The Illustrated Guide to the World's Top Counter-Terrorist Forces*, 240. The only exception was during the 1980s, when a group of divers from the Royal Australian Navy was converted to be part of the SAS for the maritime CT mission. This group was subsequently called the Offshore Assault Team (OAT). The main SOF units at that time were the SAS and the Commandos.

previous structures, it was the first joint organization with a command status for SOF (equivalent to Land, Maritime, and Air Command; the rank of SOCAUST was elevated to a Major General—2-star). At the same time, the headquarters was also renamed Special Operations HQ (SOHQ) and was expanded to a staff of around 82 persons.<sup>292</sup> With this new status, SOCOMD reported directly to the Chief of Defense Forces (CDF) for CT operations, and to the Chief Joint Operations (CJO) for all other operations. However, it remained under the command of the Chief of Army for the raise-train-sustain functions.<sup>293</sup> Today, the organization of SOCOMD remains much as it was when established in 2003. The organization chart depicting SOCOMD is shown in Figure 11:

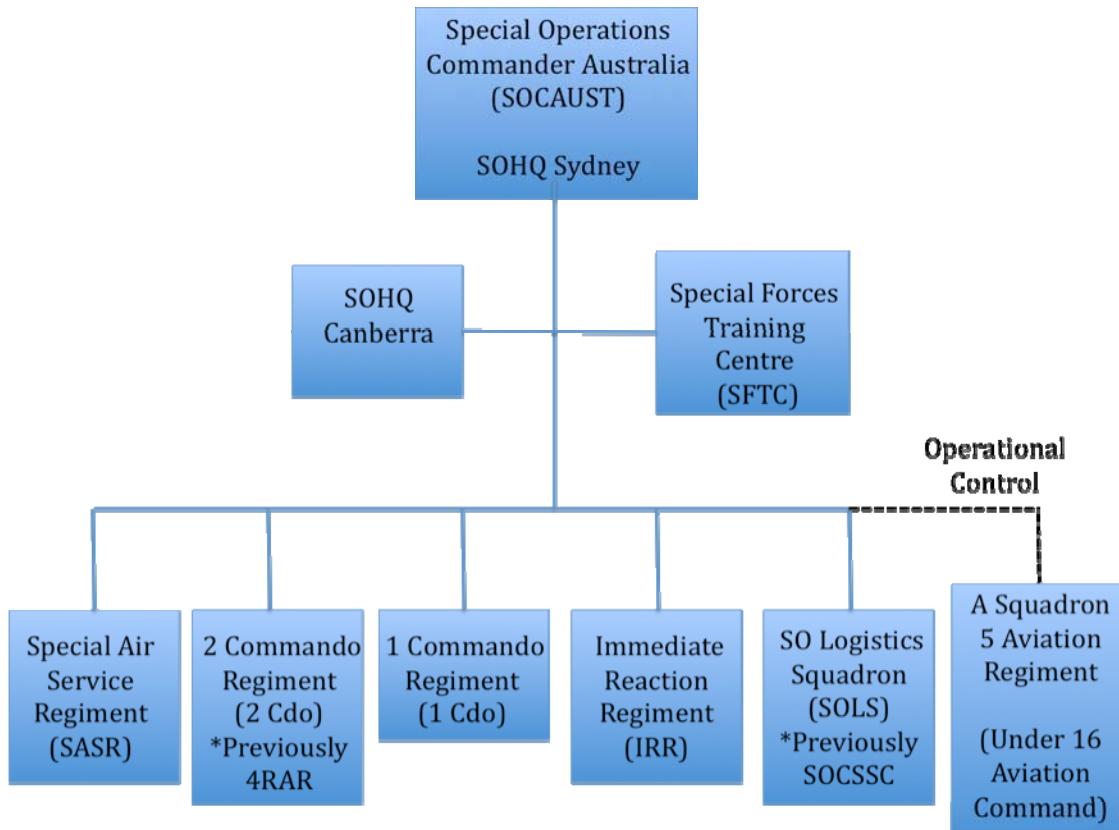


Figure 11. Organization of SOCOMD [From Gilles, p. 22]

<sup>292</sup> While the full complement of the Australian SOF is classified, it is estimated to be around 2,500 personnel.

<sup>293</sup> In the ADF, the Service Chiefs have no command responsibilities. They are mainly force providers.

Most of the units in the figure above are from the Australian Army; the only exception is the aviation unit (A Squadron).<sup>294</sup> Tellingly, this does not affect the squadron's support to SOF; the squadron continues to receive priority in its development to support SO.<sup>295</sup> In terms of geographical location, SOCOMD has to maintain two HQs; the primary in Sydney (co-located with Joint Operations), while the other is in Canberra (co-located with ADF HQ).<sup>296</sup> Last but not least, SOCOMD is the official CT node in ADF, and is entrusted with the responsibility of maintaining links with other government agencies for CT operations (this includes the SOCAUST's role in the NCTC).<sup>297</sup>

SOCOMD does not have many tactical units. In fact, it has only four action units (to again borrow language from the French case), and two others mainly for support functions (SFTC and SOLS). Within the four action units, roles and responsibilities are clearly demarcated. Tasks for these units are generally in the domains of counter-terrorism, long-range reconnaissance, and strategic strike. While there may be overlaps in some of their capabilities, these overlaps are meant to make the whole SOF system more effective, just as in the

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<sup>294</sup> As noted in a previous footnote, the Navy divers are not considered SOF. Based on the brief history presented, it seems that the Australian SOF wants to keep the executive SOF units purely Army.

<sup>295</sup> Perhaps this could also be attributed to the favorable relationship SOF has with the political-military leadership.

<sup>296</sup> SOHQ Canberra is the SOCOMD interface with the strategic level military leadership (i.e., in the ADF); it also has with it the R&D element (S8) for future capability, strategy, and doctrine development to support the larger ADF community. Meanwhile, Sydney is the main HQ because it is nearer to most of the tactical units and, at the same time, is together with the Joint HQ (operational-military level). Based on the data in 2005, there were supposed to be plans for the HQ to be consolidated in Canberra. However, there is no evidence to indicate that this has happened.

<sup>297</sup> Brailey, *The Transformation of Special Operations Forces in Contemporary Conflict*, 35-6; Gillies, *The Cutting Edge*, 23-7.

French case.<sup>298</sup> The unequivocal delineation between the SASR and Commandos, for example, is reflected in the following statement made by the first SOCAUST, Major General (MG) Duncan Lewis:

The SASR and 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion lie at opposite ends of the Special Forces spectrum in their approach to the conduct of operations. The 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion ... [is] a 'major muscle mover,' designed to be deployed and reach out and apply a great deal of concentrated military force and then return home. The SASR . . . is a very different kettle of fish. It is an organisation designed for a more surgical approach to warfare. They operate in smaller numbers in a more discreet [sic] fashion than the commandos.<sup>299</sup>

Based on the analysis thus far, and with some more examples to follow, SOCOMD's model seems to be fairly effective given that it has been established for less than a decade. What, we might wonder, differentiates it from the French case? First, full command authority comes with its Service-like status (including its own budget). This grants SOCOMD the power and flexibility to do what it needs to do to make sure plans stay on track. Unlike COS, SOCOMD does not need to share its SOF units, which could otherwise have retarded its progress.

Second, the ADF was mindful of the need to put in place proper doctrine before SOCOMD was established. A directive from the CDF to the Service Chiefs was issued on 11 April 2003 detailing the latter's responsibilities

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298 Andrew White, "Australia announces plans to rebrand 4 RAR," *Jane's International Defence Review*, June 8, 2009, <http://search.janes.com.libproxy.nps.edu/Search/documentView.do?docId> (accessed April 10, 2011); "Australia's Amphibious and Special Forces," *IHS Jane's: Defence & Security Intelligence Analysis*, [http://jasf.janes.com/docs/jasf/browse\\_country](http://jasf.janes.com/docs/jasf/browse_country) (accessed April 10, 2011); Australian Government, *Defence Review 2000 – Our Future Defence Force* (Australia Department of Defence, June 2000), 70; Frederick A. Lewis, *Is There a Place For Elite Forces In The Canadian Army?* (Kansas: Fort Leavenworth, 2002), 60–3. The only action unit that has no overlap with others is the IRR; it is specifically designed for chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRNE) response. Further, 1 Cdo consists of both reserves and active duty soldiers. As for 2 Cdo, IRR and SASR, they are made up solely of volunteers. The predecessor of 2 Cdo was 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion Royal Australian Regiment (or 4 RAR).

299 Ian Bostock, "Australian Forces Go Scud Hunting in Western Iraq," *Jane's Intelligence Review*, July 1, 2003, <http://search.janes.com.libproxy.nps.edu/Search/documentView> (accessed March 15, 2011).

vis-à-vis SOCOMD. Then, on 23 April 2003, the Chief of Army followed with additional guidance regarding the formation of SOCOMD. The latter was formulated as part of the overall program to create SOCOMD.<sup>300</sup>

Finally, SOCOMD has reach into, and influence on, the strategic leadership. SOCOMD has clear access to not only the ADF leadership, but also the national decision-making body (NCTC). This allows SOF to exercise some influence on decision/policy making, as well as to keep abreast of the latest strategic developments. It also bears emphasizing that the MG rank of SOCAUST helps in this regard. Because he has the same rank as the other conventional commanders, SOCAUST has the clout to stand against the tide if required. This further helps SOF retain its uniqueness and, to some degree, its value.<sup>301</sup>

Taking these factors together, SOCOMD has been able to effectively harmonize, integrate, orientate, and ensure proper employment and development of SOF even before it reached maturity.<sup>302</sup> Now, I will highlight some examples to support this claim. However, I will only focus on those that contribute fresh insights to the thesis.

- Orienting SOF to meet short and long term objectives. Two early examples are relevant: the Direct Recruitment Program (known as SFDRS), which aimed to expand Australian SOF to meet its short-term manpower shortfall; and, the adoption of a training command distinct from that of the Army Training Command. The latter, stood

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<sup>300</sup> Gillies, *The Cutting Edge*, 27–8, 33.

<sup>301</sup> Ibid., 53.

up in July 2004, was designed to facilitate better command and control, and a more responsive system with respect to the training and doctrinal aspects of SO.<sup>303</sup>

- Human Capability Development. The absorption of SFTC has allowed SOCOMD to implement/refine courses to meet SO requirements. This has led to tighter linkage between training and operational requirements which, in turn, has helped yield more effective SOF operators. In addition, as a Command, SOCOMD is able to implement special allowances which help with recruitment and retention. These allowances are designed to be commensurate with the skills and qualifications of the operators and the risks they need to undertake. Finally, a service-like

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302 Anna Simons, *Introductory Notes for Course on Interoperability in an Irregular Warfare World* (Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA, September 2010), 6. This, in some way, resonates with Anna Simons's assertion as she writes, "This is why a blended unit with one chain of command, under an authoritative leader who has been given strategically clear (and achievable) civilian guidance would be the most logical way to facilitate interoperability (which would then simply become operability). Barring that, however, we're back to figuring out ways to achieve cross-tribal and – ultimately, literally – cross-cultural interdependence."

303 Gillies, *The Cutting Edge*, 42-6; Ian Bostock, "Australia seeks more special forces troops," *Jane's Defence Weekly*, October 29, 2003, <http://search.janes.com.libproxy.nps.edu/Search/documentView.do?docId> (accessed March 15, 2011). Special Forces Direct Recruitment Scheme (SFDRS) was implemented to meet the short-term manpower demand of SOCOMD due to the SOF expansion. It started in January 2004 and ran for three years (with re-evaluation by SOCAUST at the end of the three-year cycle). Traditionally, SOF recruitment was limited to only serving members of ADF with at least 12 months of service. However, this old scheme would not prove sufficient to meet SOCOMD's immediate needs. It would also place significant strains on ADF's current manpower situation if SOCOMD had relied on it. Hence, SOCOMD had to create a new avenue to supplement the manpower shortfalls, which was the SFDRS. Two important factors underlying the SFDRS were: (1) no more than one-third of SOF reinforcements would be from the scheme, and (2) there would be only one training system for SOF.

SFTC was established in 1998 and was formerly under the command of HQ Training Command-Army. Previously, it proved to be very ineffective for SOF because all SOF requirements had to be approved by the Training Command (TC) first, before SFTC could act. Suffice it to say, it took lots of time and effort to get over this process (as TC could hardly understand SO; a case in point, it often took 3-30 months to get most of these requests through). After the establishment of SOCOMD in July 2004, SFTC was shifted under the command of SOCOMD, retaining a technical relationship with TC for Training Advisor responsibilities, doctrine development, and training system compliance. In this new structure, "more effective solutions and more timely development and implementation of training, policy and doctrine" were actualized. Also, SOCOMD could now better support SFTC in its training requirements, such as helping to supplement or replace instructors when the need arose.

structure also helps to expand the career options for SOF members. While this is somewhat similar to what we saw with the French, SOCOMD has the added ability to attach its members to other international partners, such as USSOCOM and British SOF.

<sup>304</sup>

- Capabilities Development. There are numerous examples that illustrate SOCOMD's effectiveness in acquiring the resources needed to enhance/support SO. Two such examples are (1) the acquisition of additional rotary-wing aircraft to support SO (*Project AIR 9000* in 2004), and (2) the boosting of the CBRNE capabilities for IRR at a cost of A\$100 million (in 2011).<sup>305</sup> Taken together, all such examples underline one important factor for SOF, which is the need to have its own budget.
- Operational Effectiveness. One way to assess effectiveness is to examine the system's output. To this end, there are numerous success stories demonstrating Australian SOF's interoperability and effectiveness in the field. One such example is the operation conducted in April 2010 in Afghanistan that aimed to reduce the Taliban threat in the Mirabad Valley. SOF operated together with the Afghan police to eliminate the Taliban's key leaders and bomb-making facilities in that area. In this operation, the SAS conducted months of surveillance before it could confirm the target. Once the target was confirmed, the SAS called in the Commandos and the Afghan police to conduct the raid and snatch operation. They

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<sup>304</sup> Gillies, *The Cutting Edge*, 46, 54, 60–1. Besides the training requirements for shooters, SFTC also takes care of officers' and NCOs' academic and SOF-specific leadership training.

<sup>305</sup> “Australia chooses multirole helicopter based on NH90 TTH,” *Jane's International Defence Review*, October 1, 2004, <http://search.janes.com.libproxy.nps.edu/Search/documentView.do?docId> (accessed March 15, 2011); Jon Grevatt, “Australia launches counter-CBRNE effort,” *Jane's Defence Industry*, January 28, 2011, <http://search.janes.com.libproxy.nps.edu/Search/documentView.do?docId> (accessed March 15, 2011); “Australia bolsters Special Forces,” *Jane's International Defence Review*, August 1, 2003, <http://search.janes.com.libproxy.nps.edu/Search/documentView.do?docId> (accessed March 15, 2011).

captured some key Taliban leaders and destroyed a large quantity of bomb-making components. In addition to surveillance-raid missions, Australian SAS has conducted successful leadership targeting missions.<sup>306</sup>

Notwithstanding all the positive things mentioned, it would be naïve to think that SOCOMD's early years were problem-free. To better understand what accounts for SOCOMD's success, it is worth examining the program that established SOCOMD: JP-199.

***b. Joint Project (JP)-199***

To accomplish the complex and time-consuming amalgamation of Australia's SOF units, the ADF instituted what was known as JP-199, whose role it was to oversee SOCOMD's establishment from inception to the time of its maturity. With hindsight, this process took almost five years (mid-2003 to mid-2008). It was run by a joint committee made up of members who had a stake in SOCOMD. As part of this project, the very first task given to the committee was to formulate the Chief of Army Directive, which provided the foundation for the establishment of SOCOMD.<sup>307</sup>

Although it is beyond the scope of this thesis to go into a full-length study of the project-management aspects of this case, there are certainly some important insights to be gleaned:

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306 Ian McPhedran, "Long manhunt triumphs in war zone - Aussie stealth nabs Taliban," *Herald Sun (Melbourne, Australia)*, April 22, 2010, <http://infoweb.newsbank.com.libproxy.nps.edu/iw-search/we> (accessed March 15, 2011); "Troops capture two Taliban bomb makers," *Townsville Bulletin (Australia)*, March 26, 2010, <http://infoweb.newsbank.com.libproxy.nps.edu/iw-search/we> (accessed March 15, 2011); Mark Dodd, "SAS 'assassinate' Taliban leader," *The Australian (Australia)*, May 7, 2009, <http://infoweb.newsbank.com.libproxy.nps.edu/iw-search/we> (accessed March 15, 2011); "Aust soldiers kill 80 Taliban fighters in Afghanistan 172," *AAP News (Australia)*, April 26, 2009, <http://infoweb.newsbank.com.libproxy.nps.edu/iw-search/we> (accessed March 15, 2011). These are just some recent examples.

307 Gillies, *The Cutting Edge*, 31–42.

(1) Manpower Shortfall. One of the most critical challenges faced in the establishment of SOCOMD was to fully staff the new command. In being a command, SOCOMD would need to expand its strength to fill the new positions created. These new positions were from three main areas: (1) SOHQ in Canberra, (2) a new company (D Company) and a new Rigid Hull Inflatable Boat (RHIB) section in 2 Cdo, and (3) the new Special Operations Logistics Squadron (SOLS). The creation of SOCOMD also required an additional 334 full-time personnel. While JP-199 postulated that these positions would be filled within two and a half years, it took SOCOMD almost five years to fully staff these positions. Fortunately, SOCOMD had the flexibility to shift manpower resources around so that these manpower issues did not have any adverse effects. Also, SOCOMD was able to implement the SFDRS as a stop-gap measure to ramp up the manpower resources in the short term to fill these gaps.<sup>308</sup>

(2) Logistics Support and RHIB Shortfall. Unlike in the previous cases, where the services maintain the raise-train-sustain function, SOCOMD felt it needed to have its own indigenous logistics support to remain effective.<sup>309</sup> As such, JP-199 called for the creation of SOLS, whose initial role was to support operations without playing a garrison role. However, as things evolved, this concept became untenable.<sup>310</sup> Consequently, SOLS had to become a more command-oriented organization, one that provided more value-added

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<sup>308</sup> Gillies, *The Cutting Edge*, 32–35, 39–42.

<sup>309</sup> Similar to the conventional services, the SO Service should have its own logistics support in order to be self-sufficient. More importantly, this would ensure that the requirements of the tactical units are supported adequately and expeditiously.

<sup>310</sup> SOCOMD initially requested for SOLS to be staffed with 250 personnel. But, because of significant shortage of combat service support (CSS) personnel across the whole ADF, it was given only 101 positions to work with. Thanks to this reduced number, SOLS's initial role was designed to provide support to operations only. This means it had no role when the units were not deployed. Clearly, the initial concept of SOLS was fundamentally flawed.

support to all the SOCOMD units.<sup>311</sup> While this seems to be working well for SOCOMD right now, it has been suggested this is still not the optimal design.<sup>312</sup>

Besides the SOLS challenge, another issue in the logistics realm pertains to the acquisition of the RHIBs for 2 Cdo, which seems symptomatic of challenges with the Australian government's acquisition system overall. Simply put, the RHIBs' acquisition was delayed for three years because the government required Australian manufacturing content in the program. While the delay did not adversely affect 2 Cdo's effectiveness (5 RHIBs were borrowed from the Navy), it reflected a deeper issue vis-à-vis the broader defense acquisition system. More precisely, it brings to the fore timeliness issues versus the costs involved in meeting high-readiness demands.<sup>313</sup>

(3) Budget & Infrastructure. It should not be hard to see that the budgetary resources required for a project on the scale of JP-199 were considerable. Resources were devoted to three key areas—manpower, equipment, and infrastructure costs. The former arose from the additional 334 new positions created, while the latter came about because of the need for new offices and infrastructure to accommodate the consolidation (as well as the expansion) of the units. Although the total cost for JP-199 is not known, figures available help indicate the magnitude of the resources required for an endeavor like this. For example, the Holsworthy program (infrastructure for 2 Cdo and

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311 What this means is that the services provided by SOLS should be those that affect most, if not all, of the SOF units. One example is the planning and management of vehicle fleet refurbishment. Given the manpower level of SOLS and geographical dispersion of SOF units (with SASR in Perth, and the rest of the units in Sydney), SOLS has to focus on a more strategic role. It does not have the capacity to be a standard, second/third line CSS unit.

312 Gillies, *The Cutting Edge*, 40–2, 66. A senior SOCOMD staff officer has commented, “the unit deserved compliments for trying, but it had not achieved the expected results.” Nevertheless, no clear suggestions were given with regard to what further actions SOLS needs to take to better meet SOCOMD's requirements.

313 Gillies, *The Cutting Edge*, 59. One may wish to question the value of such regulation vis-à-vis SOF's equipping. This is because SOF's requirements are often small-scale and specialized (unique). The Return-on-Investment (ROI) may not be worth pushing for local manufacturing content, either from an economic perspective or when considering the timeliness factor. Worth noting is that the Australians actually could have bought a suitable RHIB design directly from the U.S.

IRR) cost A\$245 million, the equipment and material costs for SOCOMD were A\$78 million, and refurbishment costs for the old offices were around A\$1 million. Beyond pointing to the costliness of transformation, another important lesson relates to giving due diligence to the budgeting exercise. Many of the plans in JP-199 suffered shortfalls in funding because of oversights during the planning phase. Further, Australia's experience also points to the importance of being able to redress these shortfalls when they do occur.

As already mentioned, apart from the costs involved in creating new infrastructure, planners also had to think about geographical location and how to co-locate certain forces to optimize SOF as a whole. One example of what was done was relocating A Squadron so that it could better serve the action units.<sup>314</sup>

Although the examples just cited represent only a handful, they should be sufficient to indicate that the process of establishing SOCOMD was not so straightforward after all. Fortunately for SOCOMD, having been granted the authority and flexibility as a command, it was able to negotiate these challenges fairly successfully and prevented them from turning into show-stoppers.

### **3. Connecting the Dots**

In Figure 12, it is clear that Trail 1 actually resembles Trail 1 in the French system. Therefore, instead of repeating what was said in that section, here I will simply highlight the differences between the French and Australian cases. These differences are, to some degree, factors that make the Australian system preferable to the French system. Broadly, they are: (1) the full command authority given to SOCOMD, (2) a more expeditious system for implementing doctrine, (3) an organic SOF training system, and finally (4) a clear reward and

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<sup>314</sup> Gillies, *The Cutting Edge*, 36–9, 58.

remuneration system. Another strength of SOCOMD is also its reach into and influence on the strategic leadership, especially the national decision-making body; this is represented by Trail 2.

Nevertheless, there is a cost to every strategy (or model). The potential downsides to what the Australians have are mainly those discussed in the previous section on the JP-199 program, which are represented by Weaknesses 3 and 4.<sup>315</sup> Weakness 3 speaks to the additional manpower resources required to establish such a service-like structure.<sup>316</sup> Weakness 4 refers to the additional budgetary resources that need to be committed (especially for new infrastructure), as well as the extraneous tasks that distract the command from its operational priorities. Additionally, there is also a misalignment between the Australian defense acquisition system and SOF's technology requirements, which is represented by Weakness 5. The need for Australian manufacturing content should not be imposed too strictly on SOF's equipping due to SOF's unique and often small-scale requirements.

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<sup>315</sup> The term 'potential' is used deliberately, as the challenges may not exist if existing resources are sufficient to meet the new requirements.

<sup>316</sup> A comparison between the French and Australian cases will help to give an indication. The COS HQ has about 60 personnel; French SOF comprises about 3,000 members. SOHQ has more than 80 personnel for an Australian SOF of about 2,500 in total strength (not all of whom are SOF per se).

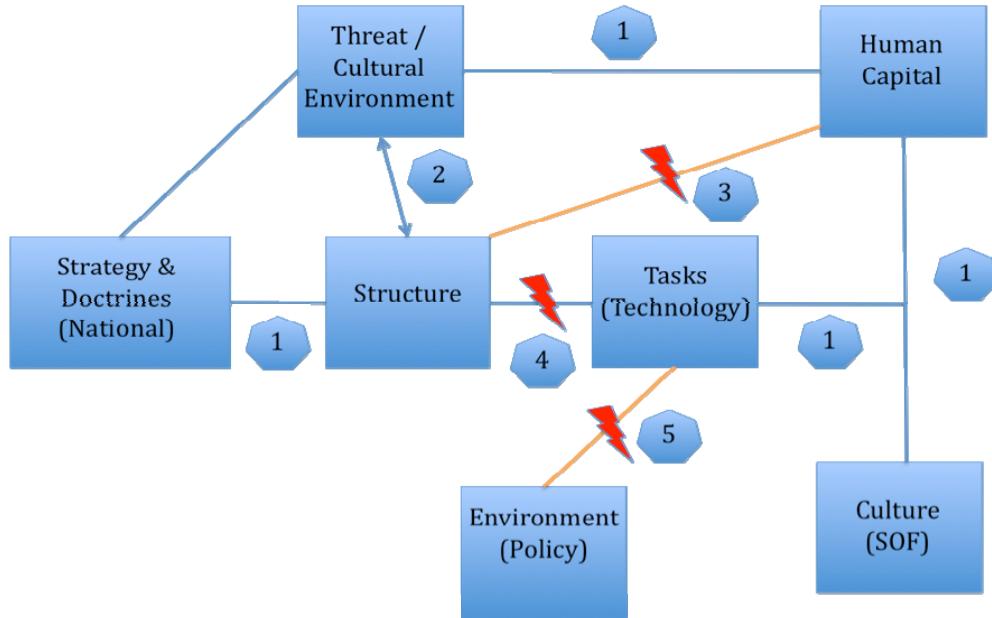


Figure 12. Pathological Analysis of Australian SOF

#### 4. Generating Insights

In sum, this case study reveals that the Service structure can be a very effective overarching organization, provided the country has the necessary resources to accommodate such growth and the expansion of SOF. The following points summarize the insights gleaned from the Australian case.

- While a clear national strategy for SOF is important, Australia's example proves that a Service Command structure (or more broadly, an oversight agency with sufficient authority, e.g., HQSO) is able to keep SOF relevant as a strategic instrument even when the former is absent. Further, this can be greatly facilitated by the command's clear access to the country's leadership (e.g., NCTC) and when the commander is given the appropriate authority (i.e., rank) that allows him to speak for SOF.
- A Service Command structure will mean expanded responsibilities for SOF as a whole. In turn, the command will require more

resources in terms of manpower, budgeting, and even infrastructure. Also, the command must be prepared to divert some of its attention to these extraneous tasks.

- c. A Service Command should have a training organization organic to it for a tighter fit between training and operational/strategic requirements. As was covered in Chapter II, this is known as the positive feedback loop. On the other hand, having such a system can also constitute a negative feedback loop when it allows the maintenance of standards and implementation of SOF-related programs to affect the upkeep of SOF tactical effectiveness.
- d. Inherent in such a Service Command structure is a more expeditious system for implementing and redressing SOF-related doctrine to keep SOF relevant and effective. Under its own authority, a command should be able to adjust the SOF system as necessary to prevent issues from having adverse effects on the SOF system as a whole.
- e. The Service Command structure is favorable for SOF human resource development for the following reasons: (1) it allows implementation/adjustment of rewards and remuneration, (2) provides better career advancement prospects for SOF members within the SO domain, and (3) may even provide other advancement opportunities that would not have been possible without the additional capacity (e.g., attachment to international SOF).
- f. When the Service Command has its own SOF budget, acquisitions will be more SOF-focused and expeditious. However, as Australia's case reminds us, there can be potential misalignment between the broader defense acquisition system and that of SOF. To maintain effectiveness, such potential misalignments need to be addressed.

- g. While it is not clear how SOF's logistics organization should be organized, it is certain that a Service Command should have its own organic logistics support given its raise-train-sustain function.
- h. As we saw in the French case, it is important for SOF to have its own dedicated aviation support and also tight links with the intelligence agencies. Australia's "whole of government" approach that includes SOCOMD in the national/strategic system ensures such support is there.
- i. Taking the French and Australian cases together, we might conclude that a favorable political-military culture for SOF is a necessary condition for establishing an oversight agency with authority. This makes sense because only when such a culture prevails will SOF be viewed as an instrumental national asset in the eyes of the top leadership.<sup>317</sup>
- j. A Service Command may not be cost-effective if there are too many SOF tactical units.<sup>318</sup> This is because it may take too many resources to consolidate these units, as well as to provide them with administrative support.<sup>319</sup> Also, the consolidation process may be especially challenging if these units are from all three (or more) services.

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<sup>317</sup> One may ask, what about Israel? For Israel, the *Bituist* ethos seems to have dominated the political-military culture. In addition, Israel also confronts unremitting security challenges that keep its leadership fully occupied.

<sup>318</sup> Unfortunately, research did not help shed light on what this ideal number should be.

<sup>319</sup> Resources are in terms of budget and manpower to support new infrastructure and the heavier administrative tasks, respectively.

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## V. CONCLUSION AND FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Whenever there are SOF units from two or more services, it is imperative that there also be a national-level oversight agency with authority for SOF. This holds even for a small military like Norway's, which has only two SOF tactical units. One conclusion this thesis comes to is that either the Component Command or the Service structure are the macro-organizations that a nation should strive for. Not only are both structures able to integrate and harmonize tactical SOF units, but they also have what it takes to align SOF with the nation's strategic requirements. In other words, they are well placed to *utilize* both *positive and negative feedback*, as well as *adapt* their forces to environmental demands. In contrast, the Service-Centric and NMSE structures are both ineffective as an overarching organization for SOF.

Given the above, I will now attempt to actualize the second objective of this study. This entails working through all the insights garnered from the case studies. Also, it bears repeating here that these considerations are more relevant to SOF organizations belonging to small to medium sized militaries. Finally, these considerations do not apply only to the Component Command and Service structures; some are applicable to any model.

- a. While neither Service-Centric nor NMSE structures are adequate as the macro-level organization for SOF, there may still be circumstances under which either would prove useful. One such scenario is during the initial establishment of SOF, when they can help to build up initial capabilities of SOF more quickly. However, once these initial capabilities have matured, the overarching organization should aim to transition to a form that resembles either a Component Command or a Service structure. On this note, this thesis finds that the Service structure is probably preferable to the Component Command because it operates with full authority and maximum flexibility. However, it requires far more resources than

the other three models, both in manpower and budgeting terms. Beyond resource demands, the Service structure means also being prepared to take on extraneous tasks vis-à-vis force management and production.

When choosing this macrostructure, another key question that a military needs to ask is whether it is ready for the SOF Commander to take on the same rank as commanders of the other services (or commands). Or, to put this another way, the military needs to ask whether the SOF community has the human capital to field such a candidate. As this thesis has noted, an organization's effectiveness is closely related to the Commander's ability to wield influence at the strategic level. Since SOF is nested within a larger hierarchical organization, the rank of the Commander is a critical consideration. Inevitably, this rank issue may also reflect broader political-military attitudes toward SOF. Insofar as the Service Chiefs are willing to accept the SOF Commander as an equal, this would signal that the military's attitude toward SOF is favorable. Then, by extension, the likelihood that the services would be willing to give up their SOF units to this new organization should be greater.

In the case of smaller militaries, a Service Command may well be beyond reach. This is not because there are attitude problems, but more due to resource challenges. In such militaries, apart from manpower and financial issues, it may be far-fetched to expect SOF to maintain full command over air operations resources, such as helicopters. Nevertheless, if the issue is mainly with air assets, then an Australia-like SOCOMD variant of the Service Command may be a suitable alternative.

- b. Even when a nation has the wherewithal for the Service organization, there are factors that may make the Component

Command Structure more attractive. When a favorable joint culture and attitude toward SOF exist in the military, it is probably more cost-effective to adopt the Component Command structure as SOF need not be self-sufficient in every aspect. A second consideration could be the number of SOF tactical units. When there are too many SOF tactical units, as in the French case, it may not make economical or operational sense to adopt a SO Service. A Component Command model would be more appropriate instead. The disadvantage would be that there will then be less flexibility and more constraints which, in turn, will cause the whole SOF system to be less responsive and effective. This may be so even when the “environmental climate” for SOF is favorable.

To help mitigate the inherent challenges a Component Command would face, it is important to make sure its relationship with the conventional services is clear. Appropriate authority should be given to it so that it can concentrate on operational matters rather than on maintaining the informal relationship. Also, the organization should be given its own separate budget for SOF-specific requirements. Finally, given that the services are responsible for the raise-train-educate-sustain function, the Component Command needs to ensure that SOF units are developed evenly. To this end, it is worth emphasizing the likelihood that Navy SOF will be marginalized when there is no proper supervision. This is because SO are often less understood by the Navy than by the Army.

- c. Insofar as SOF are considered a strategic instrument for a nation, there should be clear strategic guidance from the political-military leadership about how SOF will be employed. This will create the necessary context for the macro-organization to design a coherent military doctrine for SOF that not only addresses immediate goals,

but also longer-term national objectives. A critical element of this doctrine is to have an unequivocal division of labor for all the different SOF units. While there is bound to be an overlap of capabilities between SOF units due to the nature of SO, this redundancy should serve to make the whole SOF system more effective and robust. In other words, the division of labor should aim to delineate the niche areas for each tactical unit clearly, keeping redundant capabilities only in absolutely essential areas. This is particularly important for small militaries as human resources and other capabilities are at a premium. At the same time, the macro-organization needs to ensure that all threat areas are covered, because without a clear division of labor, the forces may risk being stretched too thin, especially if left to their own devices. Equally important is establishing a clear military doctrine at the earliest possible time; this doctrine is the cornerstone of an effective SOF system.

The clear delineation of roles should also be extended to special units of different government agencies, such as the police and national intelligence agencies. This will ensure that an effective SO capability can be maintained at the national level. One possible way to accomplish this is to have a national oversight agency, such as the NCTC, and grant the SOF macro-organization a seat at the table. Finally, in addition to a clear strategy and military doctrine, having a joint culture is also an important enabler for SO as SOF are, more often than not, joint assets.

- d. As a strategic instrument, SOF need to have access to the strategic leadership. This is not only critical for operations, but also for administrative matters. Exchanges allow SOF leaders to educate and advise those at the top on proper SOF employment and development. The “number of layers” separating the macro-

organization from the strategic-level leadership should be kept to a minimum. One way to facilitate this is to locate the macro-organization as close to the top military echelon as possible. Meanwhile, if the conventional services are still responsible for C2 of the SOF units, it is imperative that these units have access to the services' top leadership as well.

The design of the HQ is another feature critical to the macro-organization's effectiveness. Taking a leaf from the French and Australian cases, the HQ should be a joint entity with as equal a distribution as possible of SOF (and non-SOF) members from the different services/agencies. Second, the HQ should be sufficiently staffed to be able to carry out all its tasks effectively. Third, the roles and responsibilities of the sub-units within the HQ need to be clear and aligned with the HQ's tasks. For example, if the HQ is a Service Command, it will most likely have the same HQ functions as a conventional service, such as S1 to S8.<sup>320</sup> Last, are the institutionalized linkages the HQ needs to have with its key support agencies, including those outside the military. Two in particular have turned up repeatedly in our case studies: the linkages with the Air Force (dedicated air assets of crew and aircraft) and with the Intelligence agencies.

- e. Optimally, SOF should have their own organic training organization, much like the SFTC.<sup>321</sup> In cases where this is not possible, SOF should then have a tight enough relationship with the training authority that they can influence to be responsive to SOF's needs. This will ensure a tight fit between the strategic requirements for SOF and SOF's capabilities, which in turn, will keep SOF relevant

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<sup>320</sup> For the purposes of illustration, the typical functions are: S1 – manpower, S2 – Intelligence, S3 – Operations, and S4 – Logistics, etc.

<sup>321</sup> Alternatively, it would have separate training organizations within different SOF units. In this case, the macro-organization will still have C2 over SOF's training matters.

as a national instrument. Going further on the subject of training, SOF should have common basic training not only in selected specialized skills, but also in broader aspects. As described earlier, this can be done via a common SOF selection and basic training. In addition to maximizing resources (used for the actual training), this approach would provide two other potential benefits: one, it would help to match a candidate's aptitude and competencies to the task requirements early, and hence reduce attrition costs; two, it would help to build a common SOF identity and skills base from the outset, and thus make the integration of the tactical units easier.

- f. Aside from a separate budget that could help SOF pursue SOF-specific requirements (such as equipment and contingency response demands), the macro-organization should also be cognizant of how the larger defense acquisitions system can affect SOF's procurement. One such example was found in the Australian case. If such issues exist, some provision should be made to ensure that SOF's capability development is not adversely affected.
- g. In the Human Resource realm, there are three key considerations. While the first is directly related to the design and establishment of a SOF macro-organization, the other two considerations are more generic. Nonetheless, all three affect the overall effectiveness of SOF at the system level. First, both Component and Service Commands offer expanded career opportunities so that SOF members can stay within the SO domain. This is especially important for Navy and Air Force SOF. In this respect, the Service Command provides more options because of its enlarged HQ. Further, it also has an added pinnacle position for SOF officers, which is the equivalent of a Service Chief or Component Commander. Second, it is necessary to have a clear allowance and remuneration system for SOF that is commensurate with

individuals' qualifications and the risks which they are asked to take.<sup>322</sup> This becomes even more important if there is some kind of a tiered system within the SOF community itself. Concomitant with such a tiered allowance system is also the need to maintain unequivocal standards that separate the different groups. This should help both motivate and harmonize SOF, and should help with recruitment and retention. Lastly, as far as possible, SOF should employ only volunteers. This is especially important for CT missions. Apart from physical aptitude and competencies, troopers' maturity is an extremely important factor that needs to be taken into account as early as the recruitment process.

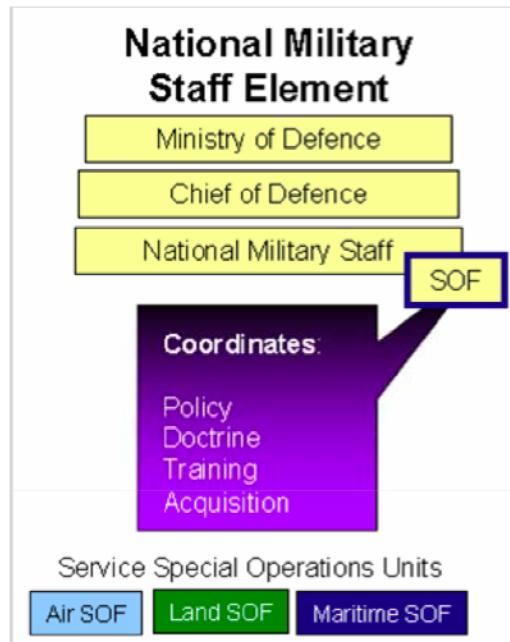
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<sup>322</sup> While the Service Command has an inherent advantage due to the authority and flexibility it has, this consideration has been generalized to make it more applicable to SOF in general.

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## APPENDIX A

Here is the NMSE structure:



NMSE Structure

The roles and responsibilities of the NMSE as given by the NATO study are:

- Serve as the senior SOF advisor to the Minister of Defence and Chief of Defence to educate and inform on the capabilities, limitations, optimal employment, and requirements of national SOF
- Develop a joint SOF vision to serve as a guide for unifying the service SOF units
- Develop national SOF policy, doctrine, training, exercises, operational procedures, and acquisition
- Integrate the SOF perspective and capabilities into defence guidance, strategic plans, joint operational plans, joint publications and doctrine

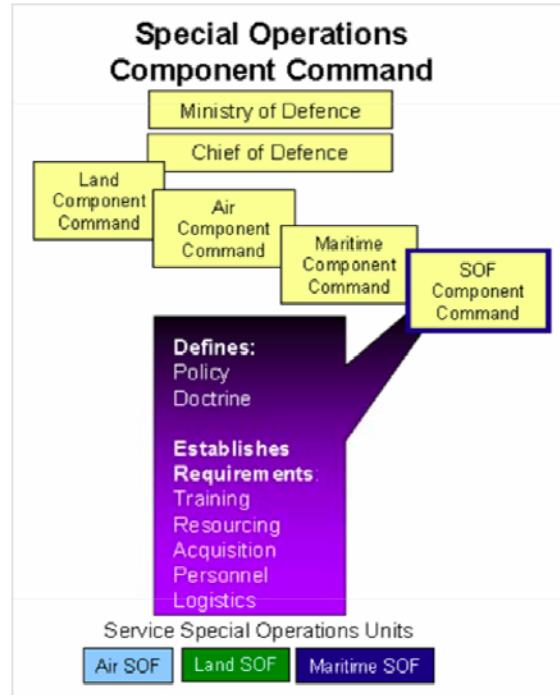
- Serve as the primary coordinating authority among the service SOF units and with conventional forces
- Work cooperatively with the military services to ensure that SOF units maintain and develop their capabilities
- Monitor and reporting on SOF operations, activities, joint training and exercises
- Represent national SOF in multinational organizations and bilateral situations<sup>323</sup>

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<sup>323</sup> NSCC, *NATO SOF Study*, 22–4.

## APPENDIX B

Here is the SO Component Command structure:



Component Command Structure

The roles and responsibilities of the Component Command as given by the NATO study are:

- Serve as the senior SOF advisor to the Minister of Defence, Chief of Defence, and conventional joint operations commanders
- Develop joint SOF vision, policy, long term strategy, and doctrine to integrate and harmonize service SOF units and enabling capabilities
- Plan, coordinate, and conduct joint special operations independently or in combination with a joint conventional force commander

- Identify operational requirements and the necessary resources (equipment, assets, enablers, logistics support)
- Establish a standing deployable joint task force headquarters for the command and control of national joint special operations or combined joint force special operations
- Manage programming and acquisition of SOF peculiar equipment, and rapidly procuring mission-specific equipment, supplies, and services
- Resource, plan, coordinate, and conduct joint and combined SOF training and exercises to standardize SOF tactics, techniques, and procedures
- Establish evaluation criteria to certify the ability of the service SOF units to meet the necessary standards for executing designated SOF missions
- Design tailored educational opportunities for SOF personnel and those personnel that support or enable SOF<sup>324</sup>

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<sup>324</sup> NSCC, *NATO SOF Study*, 25–7.

## APPENDIX C

Here is the SO Service structure:



SO Service Structure

The roles and responsibilities of the Service as given by the NATO study are:

- Develop the SOF vision and long term strategy that is aligned with national defence guidance
- Develop SOF-specific policy derived from broader defence policy guidance
- Advise and educate senior defence leadership, service chiefs, and joint force commands on the capabilities and limitations of SOF
- Develop and manage the Service budget, which includes establishing resourcing requirements and priorities

- Advocate for service resources
- Develop SOF doctrine
- Manage the professional development of SOF personnel and SOF enabling personnel
- Design, develop, and manage SOF educational and training programs
- Develop and manage a SOF acquisition system for identifying SOF requirements and priorities and for developing and procuring service common and SOF-peculiar material
- Resource and develop SOF-specific logistics capabilities<sup>325</sup>

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<sup>325</sup> NSCC, *NATO SOF Study*, 27–9.

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